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**AS EXPERIÊNCIAS DOS ESTUDANTES INDIANOS  
UMA UNIVERSIDADE EUROPEIA**

**UNDERSTANDING EXPERIENCES OF INDIAN  
STUDENTS IN EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY**



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**palavras-chave**

Experiências Estudantes, Índia, Alienação, Envolvimento

**resumo**

O presente estudo explora a experiência social e académica dos alunos Indianos na Universidade de Aveiro. O estudo é desenvolvido tendo por base os conceitos de alienação e envolvimento. Alienação é interpretada como a ausência de ligação entre a pessoa e a actividade em que está envolvida enquanto o envolvimento traduz a presença de tal ligação. Este estudo procura ainda estabelecer a relação entre a experiência académica e social dos alunos Indianos. Os resultados demonstram que a maioria dos alunos possuem um envolvimento com a sua vida social e académica embora em dois alunos este envolvimento fosse mais fraco e próximo da alienação. Existem apenas dois casos claros de alienação: um em termos académicos e outro em termos sociais. A experiência geral destes alunos demonstra a existência de algumas dificuldades na entrada, embora no final todos tenham gostado da experiência de viver em Portugal. Salienta-se, ainda, a existência de uma relação directa e indirecta entre a experiência social e académica destes alunos.

**keywords**

Student experience alienation engagement Indian Portugal

**abstract**

The present study explores the experience of Indian students, meaning their social and academic experience in the University of Aveiro. The study is developed based on the framework of alienation and engagement. Alienation means absence of a connection between the person and activity to be involved with and engagement means presence of such connection. This study also tries to explore the link between academic and social experience of Indian students. In this study it was found that majority of the students reported an engaged relationship with their academic and social life though two of them were not totally engaged and show some alienation both in academic and social dimensions. Only two students clearly demonstrated being alienated: one academically another socially. The overall experience of these students can be described as finding difficulty upon arrival, however later all of them have enjoyed living in Portugal. The link between academic and social experience was explored and it was found that they are linked directly and indirectly.

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## Chapter 1 Introduction

### 1. Introduction:

*Somebody has rightly said,  
“Stone walls do not make the school  
Nor the furniture the classroom  
It is the teachers who bring it life  
And students who bring it glory!”*

*- Annoynmous*

This quote is also meaningful for the university context. It is impossible to imagine a university without the students and teachers. The functions of the university as given by Castells (1970) and Trow (2005), creation and transmission knowledge, formation of elites, application of knowledge, and training the skilled labour force would all stand unfulfilled without teachers and students. Traditional view of higher education towards students and teachers is based on the concept best defined in Latin words *Loco Parentis*. This concept means that, universities take the place of parents for students. Thus in the colleges, teachers and administrators are required to make decisions for the academic and non-academic benefits of students (Herman, 1970).

Historically, this parent-child relationship was naturally inherited by all colleges. Students came to the universities with their background set of characteristics and universities shaped them by acting as their parents. A university affects students by not just transferring the intellectual heritage, fostering vocational competence but also by socialising the individual for effective functioning in society (Pascarella and Terrenzini, 1991). However this concept of loco-parentis is changing, now courts assert the rights of students to speech and fair play. It is also believed that this change is mostly semantic and university's implied power to control students as in traditional universities does exist but in a diluted form (Herman 1970, Trow, 2005).

Recently it is also been viewed that students are not just the recipients of collegiate influences but they are also a source for institutional change (Altbach, 1993). Burton Clark (1970) says that “students are important to the character of their institution and that the

student body becomes a major force in defining the institution” (cited in Dey Hutardo, 1995). Students are seen as dynamic entities that can influence the functioning of universities.

The importance of students for a university has been recognised by many scholars and historians. Anon (n.d) points out that a classroom with presence of students at their free will and interest will aid in growth of science and scholarship. Geiger (1985) adds that the receptivity and mix of students provide an intellectual stimulation and dynamism to university life. Therefore, students are indeed the soul of the university. Geiger (1985) puts that “The annual circulation of students in university is a dynamic factor in the lives of university which should no longer be taken for granted.” Hence it is vital to understand their issues. The students and other constituents of university influence each other and bring a change in them, and in the society.

### **1.1. Background for the study:**

Studies on student population gain popularity primarily because of the two major changes that impacted higher education. After the Second World War the social and political changes increased the demand for higher education graduates in US and Europe. This transformation of universities from ‘elite ‘ to ‘mass’ systems not just brought about changes in structure and functions of university but also in nature of student population (Trow, 2005). Another phenomenon that has affected higher education is globalisation and internationalisation. Due to this the practical and technical value of higher education is expected to increase. It has also promoted technology driven education and student mobility will increase further (Yang, 2003).

However historians assert that this mobility of students and teachers from one part of the world to another is not a new phenomenon. Since even in the medieval universities about one tenth of students were from other countries (Scott 1998, Teichler, 2007). What has changed is the scale and pace of movements (Chadee & Naidoo, 2008; Wilson, 2003). With these two phenomena, the number of students enrolling is increasing not just within a country but also across countries. The number of mobile students has increased four fold from 1975 to 2007, from 0.8 million to 2.8 million (UNESCO, 2009).

Being a foreign student is surely a valuable experience for students involved in it (Altbach, 1998). It is also considered important economically, politically, psychologically and academically for sending and receiving countries. The presence of international students on a university campus is now highly noticeable. International students and scholars are an important academic resource and provide valuable inputs through their cross-cultural perspectives and make the atmosphere in university vibrant (Lebcir & Bond, 2008; Altbach, 1998; Ville and Neri, 2008, Benell and Pearce, 2002,).

In the foreign study phenomenon, there are numerous studies focusing on economic linkages between foreign study and economy through foreign direct investments, scholarship schemes, and its benefits to university (Lebcir & Bond, 2008; Kuroda, 1995, Benell and Pearce, 2002). Foreign study as a tool for foreign policy and political cooperation has also been researched (Altbach, 1998). Due to these developments it is seen that higher education has grown significantly and is considered as an industry and a competitive sector. “As international economic advantage becomes increasingly linked to knowledge-based sectors, tertiary education that generates much of this knowledge, it is being rapidly ‘re-conceptualised in tradable terms’ (Rudner, 1997 cited in Benell and Pearce, 2002). In 2007 international trade in educational services accounted for approximately US\$65 billion (Chadee & Naidoo, 2008). One of the indicators to know the extent to which higher education has been internationalised is foreign students in other countries.

English speaking countries like US, UK and Australia attract and retain maximum students. Asia heads the list of regions sending students abroad for higher education, accounting for almost half (43%) of all international tertiary-level students in the OECD area (Vincent-lancrin, 2004). In this trend of seeing higher education as trade are students also seen merely as customers? It is necessary to go beyond the purview of higher education as commodity to be traded. It is important to study students as an integral part of higher education as learners in the pursuit of knowledge and understand their experiences to provide better quality of education.

It is seen that the flow of students in search of education is mostly from the developing to the industrialised countries (Altbach, 1998). Majority of the students from East flock to West for higher studies. Asia and Europe have shared long historical connections. They are now influencing each other through economy, international trade, foreign policy and technology transfer (Mongkhonvanit, & Emery, 2003). European Union's efforts for intra-regional cooperation particularly through higher education sector, has created cooperation with third countries through projects like Erasmus Mundus and Tempus (Wächter, 2006). Realising that higher education is a strategic sector for sustainable development of Asia; European Commission has further enacted several policies for better cooperation between the two regions (European Commission, 2007). All these factors have further increased the number of Asian students opting for Europe as their study destination. The number of Asian students studying in European countries as in 2004 was 314,884 (UNESCO). This figure is significantly larger than any other continents.

In the list of 15 most active countries that account for the world's 44% mobile students, India tops the list after China. Each year the number of students India sends is very high. For example in 2007 alone, India sent 153,000 students (UNESCO, 2009). Indian higher education system is expanding gradually but it still lacks the capacity to accommodate all students who want to obtain a higher education degree. Further foreign degree is perceived as superior, which makes study abroad an attractive option for Indians (Arunachalam, 2008). India and Portugal have also shared historical relations. However this hasn't been translated much in terms of country co-operations and as a consequence Portugal is not a study destination most Indians can think of. A EURODATA analyses based on data from UNESCO and OECD in 2002/03 showed that the number of Indian students enrolled in Portugal is just 0.11% which is way below many other European countries like UK (60.47%), Germany (19.89%) and France which is (3.63%). Under this context Studying Indian students in Portugal will offer an interesting perspective on student life in Portugal.

## **1.2 Rationale for the study:**

This study attempts to understand the experiences of Indian students. The educational environment of students is a microcosm of the bigger society and reflects its values, traditions, and practises. Students must learn to apply these rules to their operational

environment. (Ward, Bochner & Furnham, 2001). This study will understand student's academic and social experiences. This study will investigate these experiences using Jennifer Case's perspective. Her framework is based on Marxism; it will be used to find out whether Indian students experience a sense of alienation or engagement in their academic and social environment. A typology will be developed to check whether there is alienation or engagement in social and academic experience. The literature review aims to understand the relationship between the social and academic experience, and whether this relationship holds true with the Indian students.

Indian students coming to Europe for studies enter into a different set up. There exists cross-cultural diversity between Asia and Europe. Western societies are characterised as being individualistic and eastern as being collectivistic (Triandis, 1990). This gets reflected in educational practices too. Students in individualistic countries 'stand out' whereas those from collectivistic countries 'fit in' (Ward, Bochner & Furnham, 2001). These social differences, in academics, communications, and way of life make it interesting for me to study Indian students in Portugal.

My interest in this topic stems mostly from my personal experiences of study abroad. For an international student living and studying in a foreign place can be whole new process. Being an International student means receiving a many new things on one's platter. It is a combination of many things that one has to learn and move with. My personal experience is no different from what many others have to say and have already said about. It is this very thing that propels me to explore this topic further more and try to find the answers to several issues that foreign students face in a new place.

Though there is no dearth of studies on student experiences, but there are not many studies focusing on Indian students. Thus this study will add to the already existing matter. Though this topic has been studied quite a lot I feel that there is a need to look at it from a different angle, thus the idea to study it using the framework of alienation and engagement.

### **1.3 Objectives of the study:**

The formulated study hopes to understand the experiences of Indian students in Portugal. A typology of students experience pattern in terms of being alienated or engaged academically and socially will emerge.

There are many studies in this area of sojourners experiences; however the novelty of this study is the framework that is used. Most prominent conceptions of student studies use theories that are psychological in character. As a result many higher education researches have been based in this genre (Pascarella and Terrenzini, 1991). However this study makes an attempt to shift away from this genre. The framework used in this study is given by Case and has its base in Marxist thought.

There are many studies in foreign student's experiences but there are not many studies which use such kind of framework. It will be useful to expand a little more the already existing field of study. Contributions in this field are less, no matter how much already exists. The aim of the study is not to make generalisations based on the few representative samples. It aims to provide insights into the complexities and transient nature of study of student experience. As there are differences in cultures and disciplines of study the findings of the study may not be relevant to all spheres.

### **1.4. Organisation of the study:**

This study is divided into 6 chapters

Chapter 1 provides with general introduction and a background to the study explaining importance of studying students. It also mentions the rationale and the objectives of the study.

Chapter 2 discusses the concept of 'student' by tracing historical the student activities on campus and how it influenced higher education. Student's studies are done using different kinds of models and theories. This chapter will also provide insights into different theories and models of student development.

Chapter 3 is the literature review and theoretical framework for the proposed study. The literature review takes into consideration the peripheral areas that have influenced student mobility. It also describes the process of adjustment which foreign students have to

undergo. Further the literature describes the social and academic experiences and attempts to understand how they influence each other.

Chapter 4 this mentions the methodology and the research questions under this study.

Chapter 5 it discusses the findings from the interviews.

Chapter 6 draws the conclusions based on the study; it further identifies the limitations of the study and makes suggestions for future work.

### **1.5 Summary**

This chapter provided a brief introduction and background to the study, it presented the objectives the rationale of the study. The chapter concluded by giving the way this study is organised



## **Chapter 2: Understanding Students: Insights through theories and models**

### **2. Introduction:**

This chapter is divided into two sections first deals with understanding the concept of student, also by looking at how there have been transformations in student generations in university from the time when university education began to the current years. The second section deals with understanding student development through theories. This gives a coherent shape and understanding of the topic.

#### **2.1 Traces of students in university:**

The expanding nature of higher education has made students origins broad and diverse (Geiger, 1985). <sup>1</sup>In the USA, researchers have struggled to conceptualise and nurture student development from early periods ever since Harvard opened its doors. Students were considered as teenagers barely having any experience to be away from home. The concept of loco-parentis emerged and students were always in the watchful eyes of their teachers (Alleman and Finnegan, 2009). The faculty had a circumscribed role of providing liberal education and preparing students for ministry. Collegiate way of living for students was mostly immersing in learning, and later was to be absorbed by ministry. However with the emergence of colonial colleges, student population began to be comprised of farmers' children from humbler backgrounds. Thus the colleges began to balance their duties to wider society by providing training in wider curriculum (Geiger, 1985).

The period from 1820-1850 movements in college comprised of active student involvement for the independence movements and political participation became a sought after activity. These students were perhaps least understood in the history, it has been associated with negative developments. They witnessed violence and collective resistance towards college authorities. Geiger, (1985) also mentions that the colleges won against such unrepentant students by expelling them but incurred huge loss of reputation. This

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<sup>1</sup> Though there have also been student movements in Europe and Asia. The historical developments of student movements of US is considered for this study, primarily because it has had a significant impact on the higher education scenario. Geiger's work is classical study and is cited most often.

stimulated colleges to reconsider their curriculum to inculcate mental discipline and good behaviour among students.

Later (1850-1890) the Land-Morill act aimed to democratise education, it not only increased enrolments but also stressed utilitarian education. The period from 1890 witnessed another wave of change in student population with the increase in women enrolments the gulf between men's and women's experiences reduced. Through the 1890's there was proliferation of courses offered to students. Student's development through extra-curricular and sports activities assumed importance. New kinds of students began to graduate, students who were eager to participate in college campus activities, and aiming for good careers (Geiger, 1985).

Mid 1920 onwards enrolment began to surge and these quantitative expansions made Trow (1970) to come up with classifications like 'elite and mass'. The student body and nature of university functions also changed. Students in elite systems were full time residential students, trained for cultural, liberal learning and character formation for high status professions. On the other hand students in mass system started also to comprise of part-time or commuting students who were trained with knowledge for application, for employment in technical and semi-technical professions.

The 1960 witnessed not just increase in enrolment in age cohort of university students but also war veterans joining university due to passage of GI bill. New academic programs began to be built to cater to diverse groups. An academic revolution took place in early years with funds directed towards research and development. However this was followed by a backlash in late 1960 with student rebellious movement. Student movements were characterised for freedom for speech and for democratic society. This altered the relationship between university and students from paternalism to permissiveness (Geiger, 1985). It was in this period that student alienation rose to a particular focus. Alienation became a centre stage students began to be alienated from society, parents and government (Mann 2001).

In recent years the changes in student body in terms of numbers, genders, backgrounds ethnic socio-economic consideration is all evident, however what has been affected most is the growth in size of students. Governments were no more expected to afford to fund higher education systems completely. Universities were also are taking note of this since the reduced public funding has forced universities to search for other sources of funding leading to increase of fees from the students. As a result the new generation of students start to have to bear the burden of fees imposed by universities. Student are also been increasingly seen as 'clients' 'consumers' and courses as 'programmes of study'. Students today are caught in a whirl wind.

This generation of student are faced with high demands, and financial pressures. Thus the contemporary students are single-minded than their earlier generations (King, 1995). There are also changes in the way students qualify for entry into higher education, in what they learn and the ways in which it is learnt. There is an increased understanding of the importance in society in which knowledge and applied intelligence are central to economic success, personal and social wellbeing and the need of lifelong learning (Rigby, 1995).

From these developments universities and colleges now have an opportunity to reflect on recent changes in the quality of total student experience. And find a way forward for developing a true partnership between institutions and students. All this emphasize importance of the student not just as a consumer but as an individual with specific needs who thrives best in a system which is open and responsive to those needs (Opacic, 1994). This further directs to study students in globalised setting to understand the issues problems faced by them. In order to understand students, it is also important to glance over the theories of student development which help us in understanding the maturational and development process of students and the impact of interaction with environment. Following is a brief introduction to the different theories of student development.

## **2.2 Student development theories:**

These theories are not directly used in this study, but it is important to look at them. It not only helps to understand the causes and states of behaviour, students undergo but it also provides an indirect lens to look at the problem. It is used for explaining some findings of

the study. The theories on understanding student have been discerned into two main categories developmental, which describe dimensions of student development and phases of individual growth along each dimension. A second class is for the study of college student change, focuses less in intra-individual development but more on environmental and sociological origins of student change. Several theories have been put forth. However we shall be selective and, look few theories based according to the different clusters which are 1) Psychosocial 2) Cognitive structural theories 3) typological models 4) Person-environment interaction models.

### **2.3 Psycho-social theories:**

The group of psycho-social theories have the view that individual development is a process that involves the accomplishment of series of developmental tasks. The most influential work has been that of Erikson (1959, 1963, 1968). His theory is known for the three things- firstly, the “epigenetic principle” it is about the notion of sequential age related biological and psychological development and also the view that particular character and extent of development are shaped in important ways by the individual’s personal development. Secondly his concept of “crises” eight stages of psycho-social development when biological and psychosocial development presents a crisis that is the characteristic of the given stage. His third important influence on college students is his concept of identity versus identity confusion crisis as the dominant development task for traditional college age students. Identity development occupies an important place in college student’s life.

### **2.4 Cognitive Structural Theories:**

Psychosocial theories focus on content of development; cognitive structural theories seek to describe the process of change concentrating on the cognitive structures individuals constructs in order to give meaning to their worlds. They all posit a series of changes through which an individual will pass in a developmental process.

### **Kitchener and King’s reflective judgement model:**

Kitchener and King (1981) presented a hierarchical seven stage model of reflective judgement defining seven stage sequence of increasingly complex stage relating to what people know or believe and how they justify their knowledge claims and beliefs. Each

stage represents a logically coherent network of assumptions about reality and knowledge that the individual uses to perceive and organise available information and to make judgements about an issue. For Kitchner and King (1981) individual beliefs are justified in terms of their conformity to an authority's truths.

### **Jane Loevinger's theory of ego development:**

Loevinger's (1976) theory subsumes moral growth and interpersonal relations as well as cognitive development. She sees ego as a general organising framework by means of which individuals view themselves and their worlds. Then Ego development the course of character development.

She postulated nine stages, the first three them are symbiotic impulsive and self-protective are generally found in pre-college ages. Freshmen in colleges are conformists' when they accept everything and behaviour is largely determined by group behaviour values and attitudes. Then they pass through the self-awareness stage in which they gain increased awareness of themselves and appreciation of multiple possibilities in situation. The conscientious stage is when rules and values have been internalised and individual has attained the capacity for detachment and empathy. Reasoning is more complex and responsibility is recognised. The last stage in this model is individualistic, autonomous and integrated approach. Most of the work on college students has been done in the middle stages.

Several other theories have been formulated which are called the non-traditional theories for example Gilligan's (1977) different voice model, Myers-Briggs typology. They have addressed the issues of gender, ethnicity and personality. Student development theorist have also been criticised for not fully explaining the development of minorities. Some theorists like Wright (1984) argue that most theories are based on western notions of behaviour and thus may not permit full understanding of minority students.

At the end of 1970's Cross (1978) constructed a four stage developmental theory that included the relation between minority and majority groups.

**Pre-encounter stage:**

The minority group are characterised by limited self-awareness about the difference and dependence on majority group for sense of worth. Sense of assimilation is desirable for them.

**Encounter stage:** At this stage there is awareness that there are differences between majority and minority groups. Minority group members search for their own group history reinterpret all events from their own group reinterpret events and experience deepening trauma of discrimination.

**Immersion stage:** Characterised by destruction of old identity glorification of new identity as a minority group member. Minority group members discard the majority group values and stereotypes.

**Internationalisation stage:** Characterised by the internalisation of the new identity which means that the minority individual can renegotiate with the majority.

**2.5 Person Environment interaction theories:**

These kinds of theories do not explain development or growth; however they attempt to explain human behaviour by providing frameworks for thinking about student change and college effects. Many theories discuss the influence of environment on individual.

**Physical Models:**

This focus on external, physical environment, whether natural or man-made and how it moulds behaviour by permitting certain kinds of activities while limiting other kinds. Barker's (1968) 'theory of behaviour settings,' says that environment selects and shape the behaviour of the people occupying any given setting and influence them in similar ways despite their individual differences

**Human aggregate models:**

Authors of human aggregate models describe an environment and its influence in terms of the aggregate characteristics demographic characteristics, goals, values and attitudes of the people who live in it. Holland's (1966, 1985) work in vocational area is considered most important in understanding student career choices in college. He categorised people into six types like realistic, investigative, artistic, social enterprising or conventional. These

types are derived from observation of characteristics of individual in those types. Each type reflects a distinct constellation of preferences activities interests and dispositions and each category corresponds to a given vocation.

### **Perceptual Model:**

In these kinds definition of environment are related in some fashion to the individual student's perception and interpretation of external world whether behavioural or psychosocial. Moos (1976) considers influence of social climate on individuals. There are three broad dimensions a relationship dimension which involve interpersonal relations among people in the environment. Personal development dimension, (growth opportunities afforded by environment) and system maintenance and change dimension (which relates behavioural expectations within environment, the control it exercises over its participants and the manner in which it responds to change).

Stern (1970) gave the "needs-press" model of college students and their environments. According to this theory psychological needs are organisational tendencies which appear to give unity and direction to a person's behaviour. Needs are inferred from students self-reported preferences for different kinds of activities. An environmental press is a situational pressure to behave in certain ways manifested by collective activities and interpersonal interactions of individuals who occupy it.

Pervin's (1967) transactional theory is based on his belief that behaviour in best understood in terms of both the interactions (cause and effect relations) and transactions (reciprocal relations) between individual and the environment. It is a focuses on imbalances in or discrepancies between individual's perceptions of actual self and ideal self as well as perceived discrepancies between oneself and others students, self, faculty and administration. When discrepancies are higher then there is psychological strain and dissatisfaction.

Pascerella and Terenzzini (1991) have characterised Robert Pace's (1979) model as a perceptual model. Pace (1979) says that outcome of college experiences depends largely on the amount of time and effort students put in taking advantage of college opportunities,

facilities. Pace recognises the importance of student's backgrounds and other characteristics however he feels that student's participation is more salient in effective development. The extent of environmental influence is minimised and student's efforts are increased.

## **2.6 Other Perspectives:**

Theories of environmental or social change in college students are also treated with importance. These are called the "impact models" they do not focus on any particular internal processes or dimensions of student change as on the processes and individual development in their explication of the particular changes students undergo are less detailed in exposition and have a less explicit base in other theories.

### **Involvement theory**

This theory given by Alexander Astin (1976) holds that student learns by becoming involved. Student involvement refers to the amount of physical and psychological energy that student devotes to the academic experience. This involvement is on an 'object', which maybe highly generalised like student experience or highly specific like preparing for an exam. The involvement varies for each student and also for different objects at different times. Involvement has both quantitative and qualitative features. The student learning and personal development associated with any educational program is directly proportional to the quantity and quality of program and quantity of student's involvement. The effectiveness of any educational policy or program is directly related to the capacity of that policy or practise to increase student involvement.

This conception of Astin (1976) lies in between psychological and sociological explanations of student change. In his earlier theories students were given a passive role however he now assigns the institutional environment a critical role in that it affords students a greater number and variety of opportunities for encounters with other ideas and people. Now student clearly plays a central role in as much as change is likely to occur.

### **Tinto's theory of student departure:**

This is much more an explicit model of institutional impact. Tinto (1975) tried to explain the attrition process. Tinto (1975) theorises that student enter the college or university



with varying patterns of personal family and academic characteristics and skills including initial dispositions and intentions with respect to college attendance and personal goals. These intentions and commitments are further modified and reformulated on a continuing basis through a longitudinal series of interactions between the individual and the structures and members of the academic and social systems of institutions. The term integration can be understood to refer to the extent to which the individual shares the normative attitudes and values of peers and faculty in the institution and abides by the formal and informal structural requirements for the membership in that community.

Satisfying and rewarding encounters with the academic and social systems of institution are presumed to lead to greater integration in those systems. Negative interactions from the experiences reduce integration and distance the individual from the academic and social communities of the institution promoting the individual's marginality and ultimately withdrawal. Although this model has been used to study college attrition processes his model has been successfully used to study other outcomes like student reports, academic skill acquisition, personal change and major field changes. This theory of departure – student integration into academic and social systems of an institution is quite similar to Astin's involvement and Pace's quality of effort. Tinto's Model took into consideration the intra-institutional influences on students and the influence exerted on students by other individuals. Less attention is devoted to specification of the nature or strength of the influences of an institution's structural organisational characteristics or to the role of individual student effort.

#### **Pascarella's General Model for assessing change:**

Pascarella's (1985) model is a causal model that includes more explicit consideration of both an institution's structural characteristics and general environment. Pascarella says growth is a function of the direct and indirect effects of five major sets of variables. Two of those sets, students' background characteristics and structural organisational features of institution for example size selectivity residential together lay foundation for the third variable known as college environment. These three variables together influence the fourth variable the frequency and content of student's interaction with the major socialising agents on campus. Quality of effort is the fifth variable that needs to be taken into consideration. Students change is seen as a function of student's background information.

The structural features of an institution are believed to have an indirect rather than a direct influence on student development.

### **Weidman's model of undergraduate socialisation**

This model seeks to include both psychological and social structural influences on student change. The model gives attention non-cognitive changes such as those involving career choices, life style preferences, values and aspirations. Weidman's (1989) hypothesizes that students bring with them to college a set of important orienting background characteristics like socio-economic status, aptitudes, career preferences, aspirations and values. But along with these they also get normative pressures deriving from both parents and other non-college reference groups like employees, peers, and community. These characteristics and shape forces on student's choices within college's structural and organisational settings. The normative pressure may be exerted through interpersonal interactions intrapersonal processes and changes or the normative order and expectations from institutions. In addition Weidman (1989) emphasizes the role of non college influences like parents for students who stay far from family.

The socialisation process fosters students' evaluation by students of various normative influences and then they balance these and attain their personal goals. This is a reciprocal and longitudinal process. Commonalities, between the "impact models" are that each of these alternative conceptions assigns a much more prominent and specific role to the context in which the student acts and thinks. These models see students as active agents but they also see environment playing a significant role by producing changes.

### **2.7 Summary and Conclusion:**

The overall objective of this chapter was to review the student concept and to see how students have transformed over generations and impacted functioning of higher education. Over the years student body has changed and so has the role of universities. The historical context of student movements has shown that the protests depend upon situation and goals at any time in point of history. Student participation for independence movements has also been evident all over the world in Europe, Asia and Africa too. They have not just been past of nationalist movements but also academic matters leading to many reforms in

university in US and also in Latin America (Altabch, 1998). This suggested that these developments have given rise to various conditions affecting students.

The second section of this chapter aims to understand the theoretical grounds on which student studies are based. These models will not be used directly for this study however; these different theories help us to understand student's development and change. The different clusters of theories the psychosocial, cognitive structural, developmental, help us understand the intra-personal development of a student. The person-environment interaction theories provide an understanding of inter-personal changes. In this study of student experiences these models provide a conceptual understanding and also help to identify sets of variables like age, level of education, social circle that may exert an influence. Similarly these theories and models provide an evidence of how college and other environment are important and have a powerful influence on students. It asserts that there is a two way interaction between the students and environment in which they operate.

Cognitive structural theories sustained that developmental change involves a chain of stimulus and response. As individual encounters new information it conflicts with the already existing beliefs of their cognitive structure. Adaptive responses to the conflict may occur either by assimilation or accommodation. In assimilation the individual reinterprets the source of conflict to make it consistent with the present beliefs. In accommodation the individual changes presently held beliefs to make it consistent with new beliefs (Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991). In this study also it will be seen how students adapt and respond to their experience by engaging or alienating.

The developmental process of students is thus seen as a series of constructions and reconstructions. Healthy responses to cognitive or affective conflict are presumed to lead to a reformation of existing structures that incorporates new and old knowledge attitudes values and self-concepts in revised, coherent, integrated structures. In case of international students they encounter complete new situations and are faced with the conflicts (Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991). The way students deal with these conflicts and make adjustments is important.

Psycho-social theories have two components the first consists of personal, internal psychologically oriented aspects of individual being, that dispose an individual to act and respond in certain ways. This includes self-concept, ego and identity, and self-esteem. The second part of psychosocial refers to individual's personal orientation to external world, to the relationship between self and society. This is closely known as as 'personality' (Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991). Self-concept develops as a result of feedback from the situation social and academic (Alleman and Finnegan, 2009). This means ones perception about oneself determines the response students make which may be active or passive.

Student development as mentioned by theories follows a systematic pattern. Student activities and movements in universities however, are unpredictable; they depend on historical, socio-political development, political and educational systems (Altbach, 1998). It is thus very important to study student issues to gain and avoid the negative influences of student activism.

## **Chapter 3 Literature Review and theoretical framework**

### **3. Introduction**

This section will focus on scholarly works in the area of student experiences. The literature review will begin taking into account some peripheral considerations of foreign study and internationalisation, which are the factors influencing student mobility. It is expected that this analysis can provide a stronger understanding of international student experiences. Literature in this area can be analysed under the topic of cross-cultural adjustment studies.

Student experiences abroad can be simply classified into academic and non- academic experiences. In this section apart from focusing on the social and educational experiences, a link between the social and academic life is explored. Student's academic and non-academic experiences are intertwined and can't be separated. The social system in which a learner is embedded influences much of his/her learning as no human thought can restrain from such social influences (Broackman and Mc Gill, 1998).

#### **3.1. Knowledge in its Past and Present:**

Education in globalised era demands broader and global perspectives for peace, environmental concerns, for business, continued intellectual growth and excellence. For this an international knowledge system is needed where people and institutions create knowledge and structures, capable of communicating knowledge worldwide (Altbach, 1998).

Today the importance of knowledge economy is stressed for development. This demands a network of specialised experts, who can work and share international experiences, follow and encourage regional innovations through cooperation and efforts of knowledge-based economies (World Bank, 2009). To attain such growth and to be able to relate with others, study abroad programs are emphasized (Achterberg, 2002). Realising this university in United States increased their internationalisation practises mainly by educational exchange programs and this became a clarion call of education for 21<sup>st</sup> century. This trend has caught up with all higher education institutions all over the world rapidly. Though it may seem as new, internationalisation and globalisation have existed for centuries, what has changed is the pace of movements (Wilson, 2003)

Early references provide accounts of travelling scholars and inter-cultural education is traced to 272-22 BC precisely in the reign of Ashoka the great of India and establishment of University of Takshila in Asia (Ward, Bochner, Furham, 2001). Over the next thousands of year's international centres in Egypt, China, Persia, Alexandria and Rome attracted foreign students in search of knowledge. Later universities in Baghdad, Cairo, Italy, France and Germany attracted scholars from different countries (Fasheh, 1984).

In recent years the major chunk of international students are pulled towards United Kingdom, United States of America and Australia. The terms 'international students', 'foreign students', 'overseas students' are all used interchangeably to mean one and the same thing, students studying in another country. Today foreign student's /scholars are integral to academic life; they make valuable contributions to academics through their expertise and a cross-cultural perspective. They also challenge the policy makers, professional who have responsibility of serving foreign students. It is predicted that the flow of students will continue to increase in coming years (Altbach, 1998).

Recent years have witnessed a dramatic rise in the number of students opting to study abroad. The flow of students is from non industrialised nations in Asia and Africa to industrialised west ( Altbach, 1998). According to an OECD data of 2004, 2.7 million students at tertiary level are enrolled outside their home country and this number is expected to double by 2015 (OECD, 2006). Many 'push and pull' factors increase enrolments abroad. Gribble (2008) mentions that scarcity of places in home countries, and better prospects of a foreign degree like higher remunerations, and increased status makes many students study abroad. In addition, studying abroad has become affordable, with falling transportation costs and increasing communication networks and several financing options like bank loans. Some other factors that influence this choice are quality of education, political situation, availability of scholarships, educational and social facilities (Altbach, 1998).

### **3. 1.1 What comes with being an international student?**

Ever increasing enrolment of international students has stimulated lot of research in order to better understand this complex phenomenon. Literature directs to the benefits that accrue from staying abroad. David Bachner (cited in Achterberg, 2002) summarised the benefits of studying abroad as enhanced knowledge of the world, more maturity, better communication skills, and growth in leadership capacity, a sense of civic responsibility, and overall reluctance to perpetuate negative stereotypes and distortions of other cultures and an increased internationalist orientation. Besides it is also beneficial to institutions, as along with the foreign collaborations' "It has provided financial windfalls for universities, an enriched and more diverse cultural experience on campuses, and a range of economic and social benefits for the local community." (pp: 1516, Ville and Neri , 2008, Benell and Pearce, 2002, Lecibir and Bond, 2008).

In addition Bachner (cited in Achterberg, 2002) mentions that it may contribute to more cooperative, peaceful world as it has effect on foreign policies through increased career and trade opportunities. Fasheh's (1984) article questions these ideas by saying whether studying abroad is an enriching or a wasteful experience? The author says, that foreign students get only a western perspective neglecting their political and cultural backgrounds of origin, this can be a devastating experience for many.

The author further says that lack of sensitivity by academicians towards international students can harm them in explicit ways by altering their views of their culture or other culture thus harbouring feelings of hostility. Considering international students as empty vessels to be filled with western ideologies, without effective interaction according to him is dangerous and wouldn't preserve cultural diversity across the globe (Fasheh, 1984). This article however only focuses on the Arabic students in US and not elsewhere. But it does raise concerns and issues about relevancy and uniformity of knowledge offered. It also raises questions about the objectives of the programmes.

Szaniawski (1975) tried to understand the aims and frustrations students experienced in study abroad programs. It was found that the study abroad program starts with a certain planned purpose but evolves into something different due to the fact that the objectives

visiting students have at times are in conflict with the aims the faculty and staff have at host institution. Lack of explicitly stated objectives, proper communication, sufficiently written down contracts can frustrate the aims of the study. Mismatch between rules and regulations and courses offered in home and host institutions created a lot of problems for students as well as the staff. In this study it was found that students preferred to take courses which suited the requirements of their home institutions rather than enjoying the cultural and academic experiences of new institution. But the authors contends that the reason for the discrepancy in the results with other studies maybe due to the fact that the sample consisted of short term exchange students as opposed to students who came to study for longer duration.

### **3.2. Effects of being in a New Place and the Cultural overtones in an International student's life:**

The studies on local and international students are almost similar except that international students have to encounter a complete new setting (Berry1983 and Burke, 1986 Barker, 1985 cited in Westwood, 2005). Cultural diversities across countries make stints abroad interesting as well as difficult. International students have to meet the new behavioural standards, encounter new rules, new set of people, language and unfamiliar settings. International students do have difficulty to cope up to a wide range of social and academic demands (Myles & Cheng 2003; Neri & Ville, 2008). Increased stress, anxiety, depression, frustration can be a common experience for all sojourners (Church, 1982 cited in Westwood, 2005) Studies on these issues has been researched by many experts. Several models have been put forth that describe the adjustment process of foreign students.

The famous models of adjustment are U shaped and W shaped models given by Lysgaard. These models are based on temporal sequence of events (Guy and Patton, 1996). This proceeds in an initial stage of elation and optimism towards the novelties a new culture offers. The next stage is when person drops down below in a U, as he encounters problems in communication and understanding leading to frustration and delusion. And gradually he gains mastery over the new culture and climbs up to higher adjustment. The W curve is further extension; 'peak- trough- recovery' is the reverse culture shock which sojourners experience upon returning to their home-countries.



One of the classical works in this area has been that of Oberg 1960. He described the process which foreign students experience with the term “culture shock”. It is described as an accumulated anxiety resulting from the loss of all familiar signs. The author recognized as many as six aspects of culture shock: the *strain, loss and deprivation, rejection, confusion, surprise, anxiety or disgust*, and *feelings of impotence* in coping with the new culture. Foreign students are faced with new climate, cultures, and languages, modes of communication, ways and standard of behaviour all vary in new place. These and such other conditions are demanding and can be stressful (Westwood 1990).

### **3.3 International Students in the New Academic Surroundings**

Researchers like Klineberg & Hull (1979), Cajoleas (1959), Church (1982), Berry (1983), cited in Westwood have identified some concerns and difficulties faced by students which are information overload due to unfamiliarity of educational surroundings. Due to inability for normal functioning during early stages many students end up taking wrong decisions. It may also create wrong impressions on people in host cultures like teachers and other co-fellows due to frustration and inability to cope well.

When students step into a university they encounter an unfamiliar domain which they have to decipher and act accordingly. Each module, discipline has its own discourse and different student will become integrated differently according to the fields of the study (Ridley, 2004). It can be a major challenge for international students to adapt to unfamiliar learning styles and cultures when studying in a foreign country. Ridley’s study confirms all the earlier studies which emphasize that foreign students and non traditional students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds can feel when trying to make sense of higher education expectations and conventions.

Deluca (2005) analysing nursing student experiences reiterates previous findings of how students experience loneliness, financial problems, differences in social customs, and values and threats to identity (Deluca, 2005). This study on Jordanian students pointed out the need students and faculty felt about the relevancy of curriculum and content which enriches student’s own cultural and environmental needs of health in their country.

Unlike other studies which use quantitative technique, this study uses the technique of phenomenology which provides flexibility to the interviewee to express and reflect on deeper meanings of experiences. Further the author, Deluca, (2005) also used poetry and other writings to understand the ideas expressed by the participants. Another merit of this study is that it also gives suggestions as to what needs to be done to fill in the gaps which student's experiences. It recommends setting up relevant curriculum, arranging workshops, creating dialogue sessions which can help students to make their experiences meaningful. It also suggested broadening requirements of communication skills as it is important in nursing (Deluca, 2005).

Communication and language skills are researched a lot as foreign students enter into a place with different language characteristics. Research into non-native speakers into western English speaking countries has made some interesting revelations. It was found that non-native speakers found many adjustment difficulties. Along with personal challenges like finances, family support, other psycho-social challenges language barriers can impede effective communication (Myles and Cheng, 2003). In this study they checked the perception of non-native speakers towards social and cultural experiences at university. The findings of this study contradict previous findings about increased contacts with native helps in aids social adjustment. In this study it was found that students found it easier to learn about host culture through their international peers. The reasons cited for this cultural distance were that peers from similar backgrounds provide much needed moral and cultural support helps maintain sense of identity and communication is easier.

However it may also be noted that the number of students on this sample in Myles and Cheng, (2003) study comprised students with families and hence they spent more time with their families reducing time for socialisation with locals. This article suggests lack on studies on specific competencies like oral competencies' and its influence on social contacts. It also points out to the gap in literature on studies of small groups of students in particular academic facilities' (Myles and Cheng, 2003).

On similar lines a study conducted in England by Brown, (2009) on friendship pattern between international students found that there is a tendency of 'ghettoisation' that is students prefer compatriots over natives. This trend confirms with the previous studies. Students prefer to be friend of co-nationals for comfort, resulting due to shared language culture, and heritage. This tendency to gravitate towards co-nationals also meant minimum exposure to local culture and language learning opportunities but only a handful broke away from this. This tendency is stronger in Southeast Asian students as was found in this study (Brown, 2009) Such participation in networks of co-cultural makes students comfortable, familiar and is less stressful because it provides security, support, connection and a means of sharing knowledge about the new culture (Al-Sharideh & Goe, Carr, Koyama, & Thiagarajan, cited in Rosenthal and Russell, 2006).

All the above mentioned studies affected academic performance indirectly. International students are not a homogenous group and come with differing abilities and previous learning experiences affect their actual learning (Lebcir & Bond, 2008). They summarised 3 factors that impact academic performance of international students namely (i) Teaching Style, (ii) English Language and Communication, and (iii) Assessment Methods. In a study conducted by Bond to see the aspects of course in Project management module affects students' academic performance.

They found that due to lack of good proficiency in English language students relied on lectures. High requirement of English language created difficulties for some international students. They found it easier to express orally but had difficulty in written. It was also found that students preferred structured lecturing style, classroom discussions; postings on website further helped students. In this study it was also found that students preferred group assignments and assignments with more mathematical content (Lecbir and Bond, 2008).

In an exclusive study carried out in Australia by Rosenthal, Russell and Thompson (2007) regarding social connectedness, towards host culture, co-cultural, family brought in fore front some interesting findings. Unlike many other studies this study also focused on several demographic and situational factors like age, type of course, marital status, length

of enrolment and country of origin. It revealed that Asian students mix more with co-cultural unlike non-Asians who mix with Australians and other nationals. Another contrasting finding regarding Asian students is that they feel a sense of connectedness through their affiliation to off-campus cultural national religious groups.

In this study by Rosenthal, Russell and Thompson (2007) a positive relationship was seen between sense of connectedness to Melbourne and the support they received home and family. In this study it was found that out of the several factors like social mixing, organisational membership, connections to family home affected. However the three main factors that influenced the social connectedness to Melbourne were cultural background, communication skills and evaluation of their perceived academic progress. This study identifies the gap in the literature considering the need to study personality, goals and coping strategies which need to be taken into consideration when studying social connectedness to host culture.

Studies on international students focus not just on those in US Europe or Australia. Studies have also been done in students in other countries. In a study done on Chinese students in Taiwan by Jenkins and Galloway (2009) found that the extent of problems faced by other international students in their study were less. The study found that the faculty and administration perceived them to be more. The authors have attributed this reduction in problems to the fact that the methods used by Taiwanese universities in helping international students were efficient. Another interesting finding that emerged from this study was that the university expected that Chinese students may face fewer problems due to similar language and culture. However this assumption was counterintuitive in case of preparatory schools students who found it difficult to adjust in Taiwan, as the settings were not as similar as they hoped for.

Studies in actual learning mostly focus on investigating the cognitive style or the information processing approaches. The literature suggests the lack in the studies on the environmental and instructional preferences of Asians and cross-cultural differences that might exist (Ramburuth and Mc Cormick, 2001). Biggs has studied the nature of learning strategies which Asian students employ. Biggs criticises the stereotypical image which

characterises Asian students as resorting to surface learning strategy over strategic and deep learning strategies. He along with other researches draws attention to the fact that the image of Asian students as being “rote learner” is wrong. Marton et.al identifies Asian students as being learning by “understanding memorisation” over “mechanical memorisation”.

Biggs (1996) conducted research to investigate differences between learning style preferences and approaches to learning of Asian students with Australian students on their nature and participation in classrooms. Asia students tend to use deeper motivation, surface strategies, and surface motivation. As for the differences in learning styles Asian students used more of collaborative learning, by using techniques like auditory, kinesthetic and tactile. The findings of this study call the attention to the fact that there is cultural diversity in learning too, and the need for management of teaching and learning. The academic environment differs but the influence social environment casts on international students is also important.

### **3.3.1. Effects of Social Capital on International Students:**

Social capital is the social settings in which the student is and also the people in these settings. These social situations can't be isolated from cognitions as stressed in the social theories too. Chapman and Pyvis, (2005) in their study on students taking courses with offshore campuses in Singapore, have identified how students understand the dynamics of educational context and sense of themselves in relation to the society. Students are required to take up various social roles and engage in particular kinds of activities and how these preferences affect identity of students was explored. In this study they found that being part of offshore programs involves high complexities in social life and also influences identity formation. Students undergo identity transformation which was manifested in social and professional spheres (Deluca, 2005). Students got the educational identity by trying to fit into the local community by relating to fellow supervisors and peers. As it was an offshore program limited amount of time and distance makes it difficult to develop a sense of belonging to the institution.

The third proposition was that offshore students dealt with work, study and family by compartmentalising roles and activities. It also pointed out that they don't meet all requirements of study (Chapman & Pyvis, 2005). This study was relevant in terms that it not only mentions the complexities but also tries to put forth the way these are dealt with. However the drawback with this study is that the students are not international in true sense, they are enrolled in an offshore campus of an Australian university in Singapore and Hong Kong, which meant that they were still in their own surroundings that is their own country.

Research suggests that social capital is the key to economic growth international relations, crime prevention, political and civic involvement and general happiness (Neri and Ville, 2008). Influence of social relations on international students is also researched. Some researches conducted by Kleineberg and Hull indicate that academic success is related to psycho-social factors involved in the adjustment (cited in Westwood, 1990). International students look for social contacts in a host country (Westwood and Barker, 1990).

The results of this study by Westwood and Barker (1990) also support previous findings on being uneasy (culture shock) upon arrival. However authors found that as students build their network of friends they also tend to become happier. This happens due to the reduction of the extent of some problems (Westwood and Barker, 1990). These findings were consistent with previous ones that revealed such support contributed towards an improved academic performance. However the study also revealed some exceptions. This discrepancy may be explained by the terms 'bonding' and 'bridging'. They found that only a small of students formed relationship with local students that might provide them with knowhow and insights of host nation. They say the majority of the students just formed a 'bonding' than a 'bridging' social capital, as a consequence it may not really help.

Studies on adaptation and social relations show that associations between sojourners and host students foster better adjustment by good social interactions (Westwood and Barker, 1990). In order to facilitate better social adaptation many universities set up different services like psychological counselling centre, buddy students to help settle down. Westwood and Barker (1990) found that the dropout rate of international students is lower

if they had developed contact with host nationals. In order to develop social contacts students had to participate in the extra-curricular activities and other social events.

In a study conducted by Toyokawa and Toyokawa (2002) on Japanese students in US university regarding their adjustment and participation in extra-curricular activities, it was found that engagement in extra-curricular activities was positively related to general life satisfaction. This further percolated to academics, increasing greater involvement in studies. The authors say that engagement in extra-curricular activities had a reciprocal effect. Students begin to develop interest in those activities and thus it helps them to broaden their area of knowledge and explore more. They also mention that sometimes skills learnt in extra-curricular activities may be used in academic settings. In this study by Toyokawa and Toyokawa (2002) it was found that participation in extra-curricular studies increased social competence thus it influenced self-esteem, and confidence which increased their academic involvement. The authors in this study have cautioned about the findings stating that this study was conducted on a small sample and only in one institution. And they suggest that the location of the institution and other contextual factors may influence the findings.

### **3.3.2 Interplay between social and academic experience:**

Social experiences and its relation to academic experience, like stated before is inseparable. The social experience influences academic experience through social relations in different ways. It occurs mostly indirectly through enhanced sense of happiness and feelings of well being. The new friendships networks that students build acts as a support system and thereby impact academic performance positively. Further social experience may affect directly by improving the communication skills it thus helps to better understand educational expectations (Neri & Ville, 2007).

### **3.3.3 Summary of literature Review:**

While all the above studies are similar, and in the area of student experience they also differ in terms of use of methodology, sample, its nature, size. Most of them suggest that international students face problems on arrival which are similar, that of culture shock, stress and loneliness. From the literature review it is evident that the academic and social

lives of individual are important. Further it suggests that as time passes by students make social contacts with hosts or international peers or co-nationals and this helps in adjustment in social and academic life.

Experience of students can be understood from the various psychological perspectives. The literature suggests the need to study these student experiences in a flexible way. In order to fill in this gap the present study uses the framework exposed in the next section. Literature further suggests expanding the case study of student experiences to develop a theoretical understanding of the topic. (Pyvis, 2005) From the literature it is evident that there is certainly a great amount of deficiency regarding the nature of student experiences, regarding what and how it may influence their academic performances.

### **3.4 Theoretical Framework:**

The literature review points that majority of the studies in this area have been done from a psychological, cognitive perspective. This identifies the gap in the literature to include more perspectives to see the same problem. Recognising this I felt that the present study should be based on a framework given by Jenifer Case. She derived her framework from Mann's work which is based on the Marxist ideology. The theory of alienation and engagement is used to study the student experiences.

This is a simplified framework, and is better to grasp the needed dimensions, unlike the other frameworks on alienation which are difficult to measure and conceptualise. I also feel that there is no dearth of studies on students learning experiences based on different kinds of tests, but this approach is innovative and unique. Before we see this perspective it is important to understand the meanings of the terms used in this study.

### **3.5 Definitions:**

#### **➤ International students:**

UNESCO (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation) defines an international student as one who crosses his/her national border to pursue an education and excludes students who are in a program for less than one year.



➤ **Alienation:**

Alienation is derived from the latin word 'alienare' meaning estrangement or a being isolated from a group or activity to which one should belong to, 'the state or experience of being isolated from a group or an activity to which one should belong or in which one should be involved' (Mann, 2001, p. 8). The concept of alienation has its roots in the Marxism.

➤ **Engagement:**

Engagement can be defined as a connection in the context of relationship in which a student belongs to or desires or expects to belong too. It has been linked to learning. (Weber, 2004 p.295 cited in Bryson and Hand, 2007). It is a socio-cognitive model of learning that emphasises dynamic nature of engagement between learner and environment.

➤ **Student experiences:**

There is no standard definition of student experience. For the purpose of this study, student experiences are characterised as their academic experiences and social experiences that is within and outside university.

### **3.6 Conceptual framework for this study:**

Alienation can be seen from two perspectives like the Lacanian-psychoanalytic position which shows that alienation as an inescapable part of human condition. The second perspective of Marx sees alienation from socio-historical process as a division of labour within capitalism (Mann, 2001). Sarah Mann has been a pioneer in the area of interpreting Marxism to higher education. Before we see her perspective it is important to understand the relation between Marxism and Education.

#### **Marxism and Education:**

In his book on Marxism and Education, Sarup (1978) has elucidated the relationship between the two. Following are some notes from the book. The concept of alienation has its roots in the Marxism. According to Marx, work has highest potential value but the way it is performed in the coercive society and the historical conditions which influence it, can create contradictions thereby giving rise to alienation. This worker's alienation in the

means of production finds expression in all areas of his/her life. These are the areas like class, state, religion, family, ethics, art, science, literature and education.

Alienation means estrangement, which occurs when man is separated from his activity his own products from his fellow men and his species. Man destroys himself under capitalist conditions of production. The object is taken away from him; the subject is deprived of his subjectivity and humanity. Under the conditions of capitalist economy education is conducted under such alienating circumstances that it becomes a process of dehumanisation. Illich, (1973) Reimer (1971) Postman (1971) have studied this concept through the deschoolers.

Illich's (1973) argument is that dehumanisation is partly a consequence of the institutions that we create which have now grown so powerful that they shape not only our preferences but actually our sense of possibilities. Schools operate in such a way that it has become anti-social and anti-educational. For example those schooled in lower grades are eligible for higher classes. Schooling is a form of indoctrination to fit children passively into the acceptance of an ideology that keeps them democratically in place. Alienation lays stress on what it is that man has given up and its subsequent relations to the donor. Estrangement tends to stress what is left- the state of an individual upon and after giving it. Alienation appears, wherever the division of labour is operative principle of economic organisation (Sarup, 1978).

Student exchanges the product of his labour for objects house point's grades or examination certificates are metaphors for wages. On leaving the school the pupil exchanges these products for different things like jobs. Like other workers, pupils have needs for objects, to fulfil their powers, but they are not given the opportunity to acquire these objects. In this process students are transformed into products or commodities to be sold in market. Pupils are categorised only in terms of certain characteristics that ideal pupil should possess interest, discipline, ability, and intelligence (Sarup, 1978)

The teacher too is a worker whose products are in a sense his pupils and further merely affirms their character as capitalist products. The teacher then is producer and also a

worker. The social relations of pupil teacher are thus related. There maybe an inherent contradiction here because a teacher is not only a producer but is also an employee of those who wish to reproduce society as it is. Teachers may become involved in actions which are against their long term interests. It is perhaps because of these sorts of contradictions there are conflicts.

It has already been noted that teachers and pupils are seen in terms of what they can produce and so the productions that are valued are those that can be easily assessed. Many students become constrained by marks, grades, examinations and qualifications. The process involved in grading and assessing influences teachers as well, this affects their relationship with others and how they teach. Marx commented on such alienated labour, and had expressed the view that man was a social animal endowed with the capacity for seeing life activity, as an object of his will and consciousness (Sarup, 1997)

### **3.7 Sarah Mann's Perspective**

Sarah Mann's frame of looking at student experiences in higher education is a major shift from the usual approaches of deep/surface strategic methods of learning. Other approaches to student experience focus merely on cognitive and developmental aspects of student. Mann (2001) says that following seven perspectives of alienation and engagement provide a contextual perspective and provides a broader, framework for more powerful analysis on student learning. She gave the following seven perspectives to view alienation:

In this article she mentions seven perspectives, which she terms as the conditions under which alienation may arise:

The Postmodern Condition—the socio-cultural context, Positioned as Subject/Object—the primacy of discourse, The Student as Outsider—knowledge, power and insight, Bereft of the Capacity for Creativity—the teaching and learning process, Exiled from the Self—loss of the ownership of the learning process, Disciplined into Docility—assessment practices, Leave Me Alone—alienation as a strategy for self-preservation.

The first six perspectives describe the conditions under which alienation occurs and the last one describes alienation as a strategy of preservation.

### **1. The Postmodern Condition—the socio-cultural context**

This arises because of the change in focus on higher education ideals. The shift is from ideals of emancipation, truth, justice, the focus is more on meeting the functional ends. Today higher education is required to develop in student's the necessary skills to tackle world competition and maintaining an inner cohesion. This focus on utility, saleability, and efficiency is alienating one say Lyotard (1984). Frosh (1991) says this focus on utilitarianism, instrumentation, performativity, skills and competencies, dominant in the notion of education as a consumption good is an alienating one.

### **2. Positioned as Subject/Object—the primacy of discourse**

This is a Lacanian (1979) position which views human's in particular discursive formation, or order of discourse of a particular domain position, subject in a particular way. For example; in higher education students teachers are disposed to behave in certain ways. This puts constraints on their behaviour. One's identity is thus formed in the rules and locations in which one belongs. According to this an individual is estranged from ones culture language and practises. This leads to alientation.

### **3. The Student as Outsider—knowledge, power and insight**

This arises from a view of being an outsider in a foreign land as explained by Mann (2001). The students from non-traditional backgrounds entering a University are just like strangers who have to pass through check points, like matriculation, bureaucracy local language, customs etc. Student as an outsider is a view in which student confronts between two worlds the academic world which is organised, regulated, rational and reflective. And the other world which is seen as unreal masked and full of chaos. The student is confronted with the question of how to bridge the two worlds. Inability to deal with this may give rise to alienating circumstance.

### **4. Bereft of the Capacity for Creativity—the teaching and learning process**

Under this thematic, living a creative life as opposed to a compliant life is discussed. It is creativity in life that makes living fruitful. Contrasted with this is the external reality of compliance. This kind of compliant living produces feelings of alienation. In educational

contexts it is often seen that one is dependent on other, and when one's self is not validated, and fails to maintain good relationships, it leads to a loss of sense. In university teachers and students propose statements, questions which may be valid or wrong. If the statements are wrong it produces feelings of sadness. Pressure and relationship of power between the learner and the academics may not allow for the true experience, and thus creativity of self maybe hampered (Mann 2001).

#### **5. Exiled from the Self—loss of the ownership of the learning process**

Marx's concept of alienation applied to labour can be applied here also. In the times of intellectual performativity of educational contexts, the work done by students is not done for the good of learner's community, but it is done to meet the requirements of teachers, institutions and to obtain grades. According to Marx this is seen as a selfish motive. The object that is produced no longer remains with the producer but becomes a part of the exchange system. According to this system a sense of estrangement arises from loss of ownership by lecturers, students, or the institution of the means and the values given to work through assessment (Mann 2001).

#### **6. Disciplined into Docility—assessment practices**

Foucault (1979) argues that power in modern world is invisible and is expressed through two key methods in educational contexts are examinations and confessions. In education student engage in assessment practises, whether of the examination or confession type. They are engaging in activities which not only tell, something about them but also locate them in a particular hierarchy of success and expertise. Such experience tells students their worth in relation to others and according to Marx this can promote feelings of alienation.

#### **7. Leave Me Alone—alienation as a strategy for self-preservation**

From this position alienation is inevitable; we search for illusion of completeness in order to preserve ourselves against the chaotic. Thus one strategy is to maintain stability by distancing oneself from the dis-ordering. Another perspective for alienation comes from the strategy for survival on how to structure one's everyday life. Everyday reality permeates our life; our identity endlessly seeks to escape it. In educational context this

maybe seen by students who engage in surface learning to meet the dissonance in meeting requirements of study and also maintain their identity as students (Mann 2001).

Mann (2001; p11) says that these different perspectives draw our attention to current context of teaching and learning processes; “to nature of discourses, to images experiences and voices through we repress through our own knowledge and expertise to reduce and exclude the students capacity for creative engagement, to the potential heavy hand of our assessment practises in the delicate world of the student’s self and to the complexity uncertainty and threat of the learning process itself. Above all we need to be alert to our own positional power and complex relations of power that exist within the educational and teaching/learning process.”

### **3.8 Jenifer Case’s framework**

Jenifer Case (2008) also believes in stepping away from the usual dominant perspective of approaches of learning. She has drawn on three categories to 1) Entering into higher education 2) Fitting into higher education and 3) staying into higher education based on the Mann’s (2001) perspectives.

Jenifer Case and Gunstone (2006) conducted a study on engineering students. They used approaches of learning and metacognitive development to study student experiences. The findings of the phase 1 of this study were that students did understand the importance of conceptual understanding and gradually shifted to deep learning strategies. However second phase of the study showed that several important issues were missed out during the initial phase and the broader socio-cultural context hindered the process of learning.

Using Entwistle’s words Case (2008) mentions that the simplicity of learning approaches is attractive, however, this has to be questioned. Many thinkers like Weber and Haggis also question apparent reification of approaches to learning and its claims of universality. These critics of learning approaches have pointed in direction of sociological and socio-linguistic approaches. Case wanted to develop a framework for Mann’s perspective and organised Mann’s seven perspective into three categories. The reasons for entering into higher education (termed as entering into higher education) second students experience of

entering into higher education (Fitting into higher education community) third power relation into assessment practises (Staying into higher education community)

### **Entering the higher education community:**

The two perspectives of Mann highlight the reasons for choosing higher education. Mann suggests the current socio-cultural situation gives rise to utilitarianism, functionality, and competence in higher education. As a result many students choose a particular course as a result of the market value of degree in particular place than an intrinsic interest. This can be an alienating experience. Mann's fourth perspective 'bereft of the Capacity for Creativity—the teaching and learning process', suggests how lack of meaningful and purposeful living impacts general well-being of students. Leading a creative life is rather than a compliant life is essential for a person. The utilitarian goals of work are in opposition to this one.

### **Fitting into higher education:**

Mann's second and third perspective positioned as the subject/object—the primacy of discourse, the Student as Outsider—knowledge, power and insight. The second perspective constraints behaviour of students and puts them in a hierarchical relationship with teachers, seniors and thus results in disempowering and alienating experience.

Mann's third perspective, not only do students experience being strangers in an academy but also from one's culture background. She cites Tinto's (1997) work who has given a model to explain dropout rate. He says that both social and academic integration are important for student persistence.

### **Staying into higher education:**

To stay in higher education requires that they meet the various course requirements. Frequent assignments, exams are definitely pressurising. Mann's fifth perspective Exiled from the self-loss of the ownership of the learning processes focuses on the Marx's theory of alienation, in which central concept is alienation of worker from the means of production. Mann (2001) says assessment practises in higher education are akin to system of exchange and are therefore similarly alienating. Four aspects of alienation are identified: 1) alienation from product of one's labour, (assignments tasks) 2) alienation from process

of production, 3) Alienation from oneself, and 4) Alienation from human beings (classmates and lecturers).

Mann's (2001) sixth perspective 'disciplined into docility'—assessment practice brings to the forefront the power game. The practise of examination and confession makes it an alienating experience. The examination system makes an individual visible and places them in a position of either success or failure. The confession practise is seen in publications and journals these practises may be seen as subtle ways of exerting power over individual says Mann. The last perspective of Mann focuses not on assessment but comes under this category; in this the student chooses alienation as a strategy for self-preservation. Not having to participate in the best strategy for preservation.

Jenifer Case (2008) points out that if seen properly the last category is the one that concentrates on learning approach. Deep, surface approaches of learning highlight the efforts of students to remain in higher education. She points out that learning perspective has taken less into account the reasons for entering and fitting into higher education. There are very few studies which have attempted to utilise this framework.

Case (2006) conducted a study on engineering students, based on the interviews and conducting a data analysis based on method of constant comparison she derived six categories to which students may experience a sense of alienation or engagement. Following the method described above, six possible 'relationships' were identified in the data: to one's studies; to the broader university life; to home; to the career; to one's classmates; and to the lecturer. Students' descriptions of their experiences in each of these areas was used to identify both alienated and engaged experiences (defined here as simply the presence or absence of a relationship), A brief description is provided to each of these dimensions.

### **Relationship to one's studies:**

This is characterised by student's commitment and hard work to their studies. This means either self-discipline or drudgery. Some students however are not able to cope up with studies and thus they disengage themselves from it. In contrast to these alienated types



students may also experience passion for their course this is termed as engagement to one's studies.

#### **Relationship to broader university life:**

Majority of student's experience of varsity life was characterised by desire of denial for other activity in the sample of chemical engineering students of Case (2006). They felt they had no time for extracurricular activities. They were however a small number of students who made time for other activities thus showing an engagement with broader university life.

#### **Relationship with one's home:**

Student's relationship with their home depended on their socio-cultural background. For some student there was a strong seamless connection between home and university life and for some other university was a place of refuge away from home. For these students home no longer provided a sense of belonging as they felt they had changed after life at university. Thus their relationship towards home can be an alienating one.

#### **Relationship with career:**

A small number of students in Case's sample expressed their excitement towards working in their actual setting. Some said, that they felt they lacked sufficient skills, and were unsure of their ability. Student who expressed desired to work were termed as engaged and others were alienated.

#### **Relationship with classmates:**

Many students in Case's (2006) sample had a small number of defined group with which they identified. Most students limited their interaction to such small group showing a degree of alienation as most of these groups were based on ethnicity and race. Students who came under such groups were termed as alienated.

#### **Relationship with lecturer:**

Relationship with their lecturers determined whether they revealed that they were engaged or alienated. Students in Cases's (2007) sample group explained their experiences with the

teachers and they felt connected with them. It was not just actual interaction that determined the engagement but also some students felt that lecturer's care and courses made them feel warm.

Jenifer case (2007) mentions that this framework not just takes into account the cognitive dimension but also the affective dimensions. There are other theories of alienation as given by Seeman (1959), Schrabq and Cooper (2002). Seeman (1959) identified following dimensions of alienation, powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, social isolation, cultural disengagement and self-estrangement. Instruments were developed to measure degree of alienation along each dimension. Suggestions have been made that perspective of alienation and engagement provides a more contextualised and broader perspective. Based on this perspective a study was conducted in Canada, the student teachers' experiences which are interpreted in terms of three dimensions of alienation-- powerlessness, meaninglessness, and self-estrangement. These experiences are seen as the opposites of the organizational conditions that are necessary for good professional socialization. The breadth and consistency of the student teachers' comments suggest that the organizational conditions provided by the faculty should be improved so that the student teachers are more adequately socialized. Schrabq and Cooper (2002) mentioned the types of alienation as being primary and secondary. In primary alienation the subject is aware of being alienated whereas in secondary state subject is unaware of the condition.

### **3.9 Summary :**

The aim of this chapter was to review the literature and present the theoretical framework of the study. The framework was explained followed by some studies done using this framework. The chapter also gave a brief introduction to other theories of alienation.

## **Chapter 4 Methodology**

### **4. Introduction**

This chapter deals with the methodology that was used for studying the research questions. First a brief introduction is given about the techniques chosen to collect and analyse the data, and later demographic characteristics of the sample is presented. The chapter ends by providing the design for data analysis.

### **4.1 Nature of the study and technique to be used**

This was a study on experiences of Indian students in Portuguese University. The qualitative method was used to analyse the student experiences. Like many other problems in social field the term ‘experience’ is also abstract. The purpose of having a qualitative study is because, this is an exploratory study aimed not to test any kind of hypothesis but to explore and contribute to understand the nature of student experience. Quantifying such terms would yield data which could only partially explain the problem. In order to be able to explore the phenomenon sufficiently flexible approach is needed and such kind of flexibility is provided by phenomenology technique.

### **4.2 Meaning of Phenomenology approach:**

Phenomenology technique of inquiry was founded by Edmund Husserl and Alfred Schutz, (1932) who applied it to the study of social life. In this technique a phenomenon, lived experiences are explained (Speziale & Carpenter, in Penner and McClement, 2008). This technique does not explain cause and effect of phenomena. It merely describes the situations and aims to clarify meanings of the phenomena under study.

### **4.3 Selection of this approach:**

Studies on student experiences so far have been studied from psychological point of view that is, by administering psychological tests. According to Mann, (1987) studies about experiences should take into account how the student learns, what they learn by ‘asking’ rather than ‘testing’. Such technique like phenomenology, helps uncover the importance of context in learning process (Marton, 1981, Saljo, in Broackbank and Mc Gill, 1998).

Phenomenology technique is widely used in the educational settings, the technique has been divided into two streams descriptive (Husserlian) and interpretative (Heideggerian). Each gives knowledge into insight and meaning of phenomena under study but with a different aim. In the interpretative method the researcher uses his prior knowledge and experiences and interprets and unravels the hidden meanings of the phenomenon under study (Kleiman, 2004, in Penner and McClement, 2008). In contrast to this descriptive method the researches just divides them into meaning laden statements. This kind of technique is used when little is known about a phenomenon. Phenomenology technique is flexible allowing the interviewee to share and construct the world in the way they see it.

#### **4.4 Sample:**

This study made use of purposive and snowball sampling technique. A purposive sampling is one in which the respondents are chosen based on certain characteristics (Dooley, 1995). From a large population of foreign students studying in University of Aveiro, I selected my sample based on their nationality and educational qualification i.e Indians and students at Post graduate level.

In what concerns the socio-demographic characteristics of the students, out of the eight, three students were masters' students and others were doing PhDs in University of Aveiro. Out of the sample only two were women. Concerning the marital status three were married and all others were single. The age group of the participants ranged from 21-39 years. It was important to include these variables since we expect age, gender and marital status to affect the students' responses. All students except one are studying through some scholarship; one student is self-financed.

The respondents had spent at least one semester studying here and the maximum period spent was four years. This trend of students spending one semester in different university is quite a common trend amongst the Masters students because of the student mobility programmes of Europe. And the duration of PhD study for students is about four years. Snow balling sampling technique was used to identify a greater number of students. A snowball sampling technique is one in which new candidates are found with the help of already existing respondents included in the sample. This technique was employed until

the topic got saturated that is no more substantial information was achieved through additional respondents or until no more respondents were discovered (Sarantakos, 1988).

This study was conducted in university of Aveiro, which is a well established university in Portugal. From the university database it was understood that for the years 2008-2010, twelve Indian students were enrolled at post graduate level. However there are many other students doing researches in different departments and are staying in University of Aveiro for some other kinds of exchanges programs. The students were contacted by the academic services of university. An email was sent to all students included in the referred data base. Then students who expressed willingness to participate were interviewed. One can expect that those who were willing to participate in the study may have already reflected on their experience abroad. Other students were also contacted through the social networking websites. Only those students were interviewed who have at least spent one semester studying here, because they would be better able to share their experiences than students who came here for shorter duration.

#### **4.5 Research Questions:**

1. What are India student's experiences in their study abroad period in Portuguese University?
2. How academically alienated and academically engaged are these students?
3. How socially alienate and socially engaged are Indian students?
4. How does social experience influence academic experience if at all it does in this sample?
5. What kind of pattern of alienation and engagement emerges in Indian students in Portugal?

These first three research questions are interrelated; it deals with the nature of student experiences and second and third is the way the cope with it. Fourth question aims to understand the actual link between social and academic experience. Fifth question aims to put forth a complete picture for the group of students in this study.

## **4.6 Research Instruments, data collection and data analysis**

### **4.6.1 Data Collection:**

Interviews were elected as the best technique for collecting data. In the present study, six people were interviewed face to face. However taking into account the constraint, related with the fact that some students were not be present in the town/country at the time of interview. The same sets of questions were emailed to two students. In order to get the relevant information from the respondents through interviews it is very important to develop a rapport- that is making them feel comfortable. The participants were assured of the confidentiality of data with the expectation also that it would encourage honest responses from the participants.

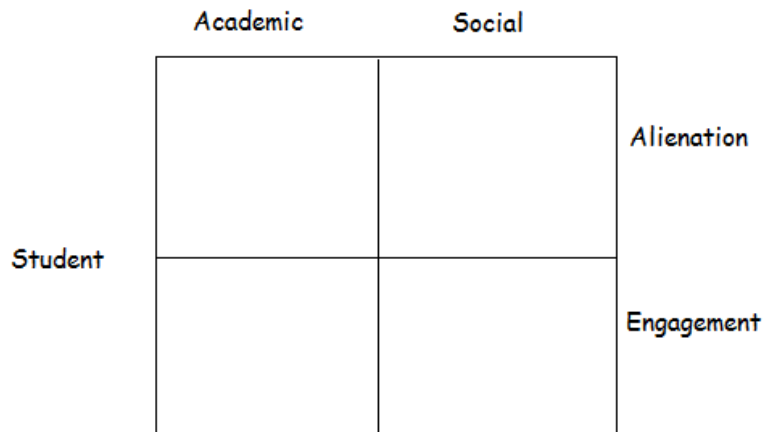
All participants were assured that the information collected from them would be used only for the purpose of this study. To stimulate students and that they openly talk about their experiences in university, sufficient rapport was developed with them. Semi-structured interview were conducted, based on the guideline constructed from the theoretical framework. Since it is a phenomenographic technique students were encouraged to talk as much as they can about their study experience in Portugal.

### **4.6.2 Procedure of data collection**

The entire interview was audio recorded with the permission of the participants and then systematically transcribed. The interviews were conducted based on the convenience of the respondents, many interviews were conducted in the cafeteria in the university campus; a few interviews were conducted at the residence of the respondents. The duration of each interview was about 20-30 minutes. The respondents openly spoke about their experiences. Students were not given any guidelines well in advance. All interviews except one were conducted in English. The content analysis on these interviews was used to determine whether the students are alienated or engaged. The data would be analysed according to Jenifer Case's categories and then a broad typology will be developed to ascertain student's academic and social alienation. The diagram of the typology is presented next.

### 4.6.3 Design

**Figure 1: Diagram of typology for classifying students.**



### 4.6.4 Data analysis

Content analysis is the method of data analysis that is adopted for the purpose of this research. “Content analysis is a technique, for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying, specific characteristic messages” (Holsti, in Kell, 1998). An attempt to analyse ‘content’ of texts, pictures, other forms of communication is made. It investigates the thematic content of subjective information, such as motives, attitudes and values (Sarantakos, 1988). In this type information maybe latent, in which meaning maybe conveyed through the documents by reading in between the lines. Words sentences have implied meanings and in this sense they are used as indicators of presence of certain things. On the other hand the information maybe a manifest content this refers to visible surface text, the actual part of the text. In this type analysis relates to straight and obvious (ibid 1988). For the purpose of this study both latent and manifest content is used.

The research process involves selecting the research topic, formulating the research questions framing a research design and collecting the data. The data is collected based on set dimensions (Sarantakos, 1988). This procedure was followed in this study as well. Accordingly the data was collected on the basis on questions in following dimensions, academic, social personal and general. The information was collected based on these categories and keeping in mind the research questions. Information was collected not just

based on the research question but respondents were encouraged to talk more so that more clues could be obtained for analysis. The interviews were transcribed and later systematically categorised based on the research questions.

The categories were formulated based on the theoretical framework of the study. These categorisations were based on Case's study. She tried to operationalise Mann's seven perspectives. These were 1) Entering higher education, 2) Fitting into higher education and 3) Staying into higher education. Further this was related to classification of students as being engaged or alienated was based upon their relationship to one's studies, relationship to one's classmates, to teachers, to broader university life and to one's home in each of the above three main categories of entering, fitting and staying in higher education. Student's responses were systematically categorised into these categories so as to help in further analysis. Students were then classified as being alienated or engaged based on their latent and manifest expressions. Further analysis was also done using the following pattern

**Figure 2: Diagram illustrating the method for data analysis:**

Relationship	Entering Higher education	Fitting into higher education	Staying into higher education
to one's studies			
to one's classmates			
to one's teachers			
to broader university life			
to one's home			
to one's career			

#### **4.7 Summary**

This chapter described the procedure for the research and the characteristics of the sample. It also mentioned the design for analysis.



## **Chapter 5 Results**

### **5 Introduction:**

This chapter intends to present and discuss the results from data analysis. Then each research question is answered based on the analyses of the responses given by the interviewees.

### **5.1 Results**

In this sample of eight Indian students it was found that the students reported fairly satisfactory experience in the University of Aveiro. It was possible to find that most of the students find the study abroad experience pleasant. Nevertheless, in the sample one female reports negative academic experience and one male shares negative social experience. A couple of students cited instances of displeasure in certain instances which will be discussed later. As with the students who are married they report they don't have much time to socialise. There were not many differences in responses of males and females. However it is interesting to note that responses of younger and older students vary to some extent. All these results will be discussed further in detail. The participant's responses revealed the following information about their relationship with the different dimensions of analysis.

#### **I. Relationship with teachers**

In the present sample all students have reported that they have good relationship with their professors. Neither of the students complained about the teaching techniques. They seemed to be quite happy about their overall interaction with their teachers. A number of students said that their teachers really cared for them. It thus states that they are engaged in their relationship towards their teachers.

#### **II. Relationship with home**

In the present sample all discourses reveal that students have a strong connection with their home. But there is a difference in the nature of the relationship unlike in study conducted by Case; this study revealed that there was no indirect connection between home and academic life. One student said *"my family is my support which helps me fare better in*

studies.”(<sup>2</sup>Inter, 5, F, PhD) For another student there seemed to be a connection with home and university through the financial support because her family paid for her studies. None of the students in the present sample reported taking direct help from their families for studies except one who said she did discuss with her husband. This differs from Cases’s studies as in her study some students reported consulting their parents for guidance in studies. This could be possibly because of the fact that current sample comprises of post graduate and PhD studies which are specialised areas where as in Case’s study the students belonged to undergraduate studies, where parents usually offer more help.

### **III. Relationship with studies**

From the responses it emerges that except a couple of students all others reported that they were satisfied with their performance thus it can be said that all are engaged. One of the students said she is not quite satisfied another student mentioned lack of motivation. This clearly states that these two students are disengaged with studies. The detailed explanations will be discussed in later part of the discussion.

### **IV. Relationship with classmates:**

Except two students all students seem engaged in terms of their relations with their classmates. Two students seemed to show some disengagement which was revealed from their responses (these responses which are provided later).

### **V. Relationship to career:**

When asked about their relationship with careers, most students said that they were looking forward to working. When asked on where they would like to work majority of the students said that they would like to gain some experience in Europe and then go back to India. Many students felt that their study abroad stint gave them an edge over other students and will surely help in advancement of their careers. Except two all other students were sure about the area they would want to work in. Thus all students except one clearly show an engaged relationship. The student showing disengaged relationship stated, “*I don’t know whether I want to stay in this field.*” (Inter, 1, F, PhD). The other student who

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<sup>2</sup> Inter stands for Interviewee followed by the number assigned to the respondent, F / M stands for female or male respondent M stands for masters student PhD stands for PhD student

was unsure was master's level student who was undecided whether he would want to work or pursue further studies.

## **VI. Relationship to broader University life:**

All students except the students who are single share an active social life. These students may be called as being engaged in their social activities. The students who are married may be called as socially disengaged as they seem to enjoy their leisure time only with their families.

### **5.2 Data Analysis**

From the content analysis important information was gathered which can represent clues to find answers for the main research questions that were as follows:

#### ***1. What are India student's experiences in their study abroad period in Portuguese University?***

In order to answer this research question the data was categorised into three main categories as mentioned before, experiences of entering, experiences of fitting into higher education and experience of staying. Each one was crossed with the following thematic: to one's studies, classmates, teacher's broader university life and to one's home and career were then analysed.

#### **A. Experiences of entering:**

Experiences of students upon arrival were positive except for the feelings of being away from home. Student descriptions included words like, "*good, exciting and everything is wonderful, the infrastructure, facilities, teachers it is way beyond what I had imagined it to be.*" (Words picked from responses of participants) All discourses suggest that students were happy after arrival. However, in the framework of the present study, 'experiences of entering' mean, 'reasons of studying or choosing' which determine whether students are engaged or alienated.

Case formed this dimension by grouping on Mann's perspective, that is alienation arises based on the reasons to enter into higher education. If a student pursues higher education

out of intrinsic interest he/she is likely to be engaged. In this study the experiences of entering are those in which reasons for studying abroad or reasons for making the present choice of course are included. In the present sample except two students most of the students came to Portugal with a strong desire of studies. One participant came here because of her husband's job, and later decided to pursue studies. Most of the students were motivated by a strong desire to study abroad, this is reflected from their responses, for e.g. one interviewee said, "*It was my dream to study abroad*" (Inter, 8, M, M) another said, "*I wanted to have an international exposure.*" (Inter 2, M, M). This is in accordance with the UNESCO (2009) data and findings of Arunachalam (2008) on how study abroad is preferred option for Indians.

However, their interviews reflects that Portugal was not a purposeful choice it was either because of the course required them to be here or because of some scholarship attached to Portugal eg: "*I am here just by chance and I got an opportunity to study*". (Inter 1, F, Phd). "*I came here because of the scholarship I came here because my course requirement to study here.*"(Inter, 2, 3 M) This is again in accordance with the EURODATA analyses which show that Portugal is not easily thought study destination.

In the present sample all students except one had chosen the field of study based on their interest or as a continuation of their previous studies. These expressions of the students reveal that their decision to choose to study abroad was a conscious one, and they are not alienated on entering abroad. An exception to this was one participant who came here because she was allotted a project. This case will be discussed later in the fourth research question. Even if the decision to study abroad was a conscious choice, it doesn't mean that they did not face any difficulties. To understand better this process we are now reflecting over other specific themes.

- **Experiences of entering with each of the six dimensions**

**Experiences of entering and the relationship with one's study** points out that majority of the students reported that it took sometime for them to understand the system of working. A participant explained, "*The education system is different here, there is*

*interaction, group discussions in the class and I was hesitant to speak in the class when I arrived.”*(Inter 3, M , M) These statements suggest that student did feel alienated upon arrival. Mann suggests that such kind of alienation arises due to being outsider to any community. In this case the different community is the different academic environment.

**Experiences of entering and the relationship to one’s classmates** the descriptions point out that all of them were eager to interact and know each other and make friends. However some students remarked that they felt it was difficult to understand each other due to language problems like differences in accents, and cultural differences in speaking and customs. One student said “*some students found it difficult to understand what I say hence sometimes I feel shy to talk.*” (Inter, 3, M, M) This was in accordance with the findings of Myles and Cheng (2003) that non-native speakers finding it difficult to adjust with others.

**Experiences of entering and relationship to one’s teachers** here also students seemed to have been hesitant to approach their teachers, this was specifically seen in the master’s level students. Students doing PhD seemed to have comfortable relations with their supervisors ever since arrival. This could be due to the fact that there are frequent interactions with their supervisor. It also maybe due to the fact that PhD students have been here for longer duration than masters students hence they share good relations. “I feel quite comfortable with my professor” (Inter 4, M, PhD)

**Experiences of entering and relationship to one’s home** this has been the most difficult experience for all the students who explained that they felt depressed being away from home immediately upon arrival. Students said they were “*sad, and felt lonely*”. (Inter?)

**Experiences of entering and relationship to one’s career** almost all students said that they were optimistic about better prospects through a foreign degree. “*Studying abroad is always considered good in terms of exposure.*” (Inter, 5, F, PhD)

**Experiences of entering and broader university life,** description of students reveal that there wasn’t much time to socialise in the initial day upon arrival due to the fact that they were busy settling down.

## **B) Experiences of fitting in**

According to this theory, alienation arises as students get positioned in certain ways or relationships which may restrict their actual behaviour, like students relations with their classmates and teachers and their home.

From the interviews it emerges that the majority of the respondents had good relations with their classmates or lab mates. They mentioned their relations being friendly but competitive at the same time. However there were two participants who expressed that their relations were not very good, one interviewee disclosed that, the student finds some kind of communication gap and felt that the relations with lab mates were ordinary. A participant said, *“I feel like some warmth is missing maybe because of language problems”* (Inter-4 M PhD). These difficulties in relations with the classmates however weren't seen in case of the teachers.

As regards to relationship with their teachers and supervisors many students echoed that they had wonderful relations and faced no problems whatsoever. In fact most of them said that their relations with teachers here are completely different than what they had in India. Respondents mentioned that their relations with the teachers here are cordial, friendly and nice. One student said, *“I have good relations with my teachers, if you approach them they are always very cooperative I think the relations with my teachers here are much better than in India* (Inter 1, F, PhD). *“In India they are very strict but here they are very caring.”* (Inter, 6, M PhD) Another student said *“My relations with my professor are very informal”. In India I feel there is some hierarchy between student and teacher relationship which is absent here, it is a very friendly relation.”*(Inter 5, F, PhD) & (Inter, 4 M, PhD). This difference could be attributed to cultural differences'; Indian culture is marked by hierarchy which is seen in all interpersonal relations. The young are expected to respect the older and there are certain behaviour norms which are to be followed. This is seen in student teacher relationship too, students are expected to respect and obey their teachers (Pellisery, 2008). This translates into being fearful of teachers and creates distance between them.

On being asked about their home and families all students said they miss being away from home. But almost all students said that due to technological developments talking to family

isn't any problem now. Except for a couple of students who said that they felt very sad at being away from home. One student said, *"In the beginning when I arrived here, I cried a lot almost everyday, I would miss being away from home. But now things are fine."*(Inter5, F, PhD) Another respondent also expressed similar feelings, he said, *"it gets very difficult and I feel sad especially when I come to know that back home there are some problems and I can't be of any help to them."*(Inter4, M, PhD) These experiences are very common amongst foreign students, as seen in other studies too by Westwood, (2005); Neri & Ville, (2008). This is normal due to the fact that students enter unfamiliar domain.

Contrary to this, one student said being away from family was an interesting experience as *"it helped to see the other side of the world, different people, different culture etc. Since in Indian culture there is little chance of being independent, here I learnt how to be more independent."*(Inter 8, M, M) This is an interesting finding which maybe considered in accordance with Case's findings where some students find university as a place of refuge away from home. However in this instance one cannot completely conclude in that manner, as the student doesn't have negative feelings towards home and reports being comfortable being in family. He further says, *"I feel nice when I speak to my family once a week."* Thus it can be inferred that he just sees study abroad experience in a broader way. It is also due to the fact that in India family system has a stronger hold, and people identify themselves strongly with their families.

- **Experiences of fitting in with each of the six dimensions**

**Experiences of fitting in and relationship to one's studies**, in this phase students experienced problems with their approach of study but they enjoyed the flexibility and innovative approach to studies.

**Experiences of fitting in and relationship to classmates** the initial elation and excitement of meeting new people seemed to give away to feelings of irritation, difficulties, understanding and adjusting with each other. *"I feel like I have to adjust with other, for example I have to repeat what I say."*(Inter, 3,M, M) One student said, *"Sometimes I don't understand others."*(Inter, 1, F, PhD)"

**Experiences of fitting in and relationship to teachers** It was found that Masters level students who felt hesitant to approach teachers in the beginning said that they were now comfortable interacting with their teachers and approaching them for help.

For example one respondent said, *“I meet my teachers whenever I have a query.”* (Inter, 8, M, M)

**Experiences of fitting in and relationship to one’s career** there seemed to be no change in this stage, of student’s perception about the advantages of studying abroad and good career.

**Experience of fitting in and relationship to home** Majority of the students missed being away from family but the intensity of these feelings had reduced in comparison to the time of entering. Statements like, *“I have got used to it now”* were commonly heard

**Experiences of fitting in and relationship to broader university life** All students said that they found sufficient time to socialise and academic affairs weren’t too demanding at this stage.

### **C) Experiences of staying**

The framework suggests that assessment practises and course requirements can results in feelings of alienation. In the present sample respondents inclination towards assessment practises were not negative. Many of them felt that the assessment practises were tough but they were fair. A participant even said *“assignments and assessment practises are good they are the way it should be, it really makes me work hard, due to this kind of practise I get to know my subject better.”*(Inter 2, M , M) Another respondent said *“the feedbacks by professors on our assignments are very helpful and indeed help me to improve.”*(Inter, 3 M, M) However a couple of respondents felt pressured and said *“ I feel pressured at times”*(Inter,1F, PhD) *another respondent said, “the evaluation is done at the end of the semester I feel that it should be more regular, I feel less motivated to study because of this.”*(Inter 3, M, M)”

This could be attributed to the difference in assessment practises in India which is very highly exam oriented pattern. Perhaps the students have got habituated to that system and may find it difficult to adjust to new ways of assessment. From these descriptions it can be concluded that in what concerns experience of staying, with the exception of two students all others are engaged.



- **Experiences of staying with each of six dimensions**

**Experiences of staying and relationship with classmates,** The interviews reveal that students had a healthy and competitive relationship with their classmates at this phase. Evidences of students seeking and providing help to classmates and lab mates emerge in majority of the sample. One student said, “*We share the material and information, with other students from the conferences we attend.*” (Inter 1, F, PhD)

**Experiences of staying in and relationship with studies** In the present sample it was seen that students reported being happy and satisfied with their performance.

**Experiences of staying in and relationship with teachers,** students didn’t report any specific change from the earlier stage.

**Experiences of staying in and relationship to home** In this phase some students said that they were used to living away from home but some others desired to meet their families. One student said, *I feel I have overcome those feelings now*” (Inter 1, F, PhD)

**Experiences of staying and relationship with career** in this phase feelings towards career didn’t change much except that all said they were looking forward to working.

**Experiences of staying and relationship with broader university life** There wasn’t significant change in social life.

From this it can be concluded that in this sample student’s perception towards their career remains the same at all three phases. Their relationship with their classmates however report a change from the time they arrive to the later stage, with an initial period of excitement to later stage of dissatisfaction and then again a stage of getting adjusted and sharing views.

As regards to their relationship with teachers two things emerge, masters students had less interaction in the beginning but later develop good relationship with their teachers. In case of students doing PhD they seemed to have better relations with their teachers’ right from the beginning and report no specific change. This difference can be attributed to the fact that PhD students share a more one to one relationship with their teachers and also have more frequent interaction.

## **2. *How academically alienated and academically engaged are these students?***

In order to be able to answer this question student's perception towards their study and their abilities were taken into account. For many students it was a conscious decision to study abroad. One student's said, *"I wanted an international exposure, and I thought it would be interesting to study with students from all over the world."*(Inter, 8, M , M) Another student said, *"Living with different students helps me understand different cultures, ways of thinking and living and I feel this is what is also needed in any work setting today."*(Inter,6, M, PhD) From this it can be concluded that students had clear goals to study abroad. However a tinge of alienation is seen in one of the interviewee's description where the student says that studying abroad is the need of the hour, stressing the utilitarian view towards higher education. Mann says the utilitarian goal produces a sense of alienation amongst students who do things out of compulsion and not out of interest. However it is wrong to completely classify this student as being alienated as he doesn't complain about study abroad experience.

On being questioned about how they feel about their studies in the university of Aveiro, except for a couple of students all others seem to be happy and highly satisfied about their performance in this university. Students remarked, that *they enjoyed, happy, and are satisfied with the studies*. One student said, *"studies here are tough, competitive and challenging but I am very happy studying in this kind of environment."*(Inter, 8, M, M) Another student said, *"I feel confident about facing any kind of European assessment now."*(Inter, 2, M, M)

When students were asked about how they perceive their abilities and knowledge many of the students said that they felt they were competent. One student said, *"the atmosphere was competitive and sometimes I felt other students were better than me."* (Inter1) A few students said that, *"the other international students have different talents and as we all had different backgrounds, education systems have been so different hence I feel it is difficult to compare."* One student said, *"maybe because I was good my professor suggested and helped me to continue with a PhD under his guidance."*(Inter 6, M, PhD) Another student said that, *"I am definitely better than others and my professors are really*

*happy with my work.*”(Inter, 4, M, PhD). From these descriptions it is evident that students have no bad feelings about their abilities.

From all these descriptions it is evident that students have no negative feelings towards their professors, classmates, or towards the assessment practises suggesting that they are engaged. This maybe also explained using Pervin’s (1967) transactional theory which suggests that when there are discrepancies between individual’s actual and ideal self along with the environment it leads to dissatisfaction. In this case students seemed to have a balance between their perception of their own self and others, thereby leading to feelings of satisfaction.

In contrast to all above students’ one student’s discourse was negative. She seemed to be unhappy and said, *“I am not 100 percent happy studying here. I feel lot of pressure.” I have become so indisciplined I am not able to focus” During the first two years of my stay here I felt like an alien, I was new to this area of research, I felt like an outsider. I was allotted a project*”(Inter 1, F, PhD). It is evident from the description that academic alienation has resulted from the sense of being an outsider in the area of the study. The respondent has led a compliant life which gave rise to alienation in the first year of the study.

Another student described his disengaged experience as follows, *“Somehow I am not as motivated as I used to be in India, I can’t wake up early I end up sleeping long time. I feel like I have become very lazy, my performance hasn’t suffered but still I feel I am not giving my best.”*(Inter, 3, M, M) Clearly this description isn’t healthy one and states less motivation and involvement with studies. It is further interesting to note that the student hasn’t performed badly in exams, but feels that it is way below his potential. It suggests that the student is alienated to some extent.

It is seen that this student shows some traces of alienation towards his studies as he feels it, this can be explained using Astin’s involvement theory. This theory states that amount of student learning is directly proportional to quality and quantity of student involvement. In this case the student feels he devotes less time and energy towards his study. Thus it suggests that the student feels he is less involved quantitatively with the studies.

### ***3. How socially alienate and socially engaged are Indian students?***

In the present sample majority of respondents who are without families here enjoy an active social life, which comprises of travelling, meeting friends and other activities like sports and entertainment. All students said that they have enough time for socialising and studies are not very hectic. However respondents with families reported that they didn't find time to socialise as they spent their free time with families. One of the respondents said, *"I spend most of my time with family, I hardly have time for social activities."*(Inter, 5, F, PhD)

On being asked about their friends, all students said that they had many friends from different countries. Except one student who said he prefers to hang out with other Indian friends more. One student said, *"I enjoy being with students from different countries, its fun, in fact I have very few Indian friends. One of reasons why I have come abroad to study, is to meet and understand new people and cultures."*(Inter 2, M, M) Quite contrary to other people's responses one respondent said that, *"I have many Indian and international friend's,* on further being asked about the nationalities of the international students this respondent said *"they are mostly from Bangladesh, Srilanka and Pakistan (all Indian sub-continent)."*(Inter 7, M, PhD) This is very much in contrast with other Indian students who didn't prefer co-patriots but in this case it is same as with other studies on South East Asian students who preferred Asian students over other nationalities. This was also found by Brown (2009) in a study of friendship patterns amongst international students. This could be attributed to cultural similarities and feelings of comfort derived from such co-cultures.

From these students' discourses, one way to conclude is that the majority of the students have not felt socially alienated. Even if some of them socialise more in those culturally similar background. The dominant discourses claims for the total integration in Portuguese society and also with other international students. This is evident from the following expression given by the students, *"I never felt like I was in a foreign country, I felt that I integrated very smoothly in this society, people are so friendly and caring."*(Inter, 2, M, M) Another student remarked that *"I never felt like I was an outsider, people are so kind*

*and good.” This was reiterated by other students who said, “I never felt alienated in Portugal but when I was in another country I did feel strange.” (Inter 6, M, PhD) Thus it can be concluded that majority of the students are engaged socially.*

***3. How does social experience influence academic experience if at all it does in this sample?***

In the present sample evidence of a direct as well as an indirect relationship between academic and social experience emerges. Some students reported that they spent time doing group studies, or asking friends to clear doubts in subjects, sometimes spent time discussing certain academic concepts. On the other hand there were evidences of indirect relation from statements like, *“social circle helps me in academics, and I would say the support, because of my friends I don’t feel I am away from home.”*(Inter, 1, F, PhD) Another student also expressed similar feelings, *“friends have helped me to settle down faster otherwise being all alone is very depressing.”*(Inter, 2, M, M) This is in accordance with the findings of Ville (2007) who mentions social contacts as a support system. And this is precisely what is observed in the above instances where students report friends as a support.

Another student reported in similar manner of feelings of belonging, and a sense of moral support. He said, *“I was sick during my first semester, my friends helped me a lot with studies, they would visit me in hospital and even my teachers enquired, it felt very nice.”*(Inter, 6, M, PhD) However there were other respondents who said that it isn’t really helpful, for example one student said, *“I study by myself. I don’t rely on others to help me we also don’t do group studies, besides my social circle comprises of friends other than my classmates too.”*(Inter 2, M, M) As for the married respondents they said that their family is a support for them and interactions with classmates helps in their studies. Another respondent felt that *“Study and research is entirely personal and limited to lab/university. Social life is neither disturbing me nor helping me much.”*(Inter, 7, M, PhD).

#### **4. What kind of pattern of alienation and engagement emerges in Indian students in Portugal?**

From the students discourses it is revealed that some respondents said that arriving in Portugal was very difficult for them. One respondent said, *“When I arrived here I felt very homesick, I would cry, I felt like everything was different from my home, culture, but now I have overcome those feelings.”*(Inter, 5, F, PhD) This was said by many others, *“during the first few months of my stay here I felt like a stranger, but now I have got used to Portugal and like being here.”*(Inter,4, M, PhD) *“I felt a bit hesitant in the class for the first week I would keep quiet but later I also began to participate actively in classroom discussions.”*(Inter, 6, M, PhD) From all these description it is evident that arriving in a new place was the most difficult part for many Indian respondents. This also in accordance with all previous studies done by Deluca (2005) Ridley (2004) and Westwood (1990) on international students, who experience loneliness and depression upon arrival in new place.

The discourses of the majority of the students suggest that they haven't felt alienated socially or academically. Some of them also mention the reasons why they don't feel alienated. *“I definitely don't feel alienated but sometimes I feel like I have to make lots of adjustments, but I never felt like outsider, I was helped by everyone.”* Another remarked, *“No I certainly don't feel like an outsider, it has been very easy to live here.”* (Inter, 8, M,M). Similar feelings very cited by others *“I feel people are very nice here and thus I don't feel alienated. (Inter, 7,M, M)”*

On the contrary one student said, *“sometimes I feel a bit alienated here in my lab, I don't understand the language much, hence I feel like I can't be a part of their conversations, further more sometimes I have felt like there is some kind of faction, once I was told by another student, “as long as you, Chinese and Russians occupy positions here, the chances for us to get in remain so dim.”*(Inter, 4, M, PhD) This completely contradicts other student's opinions. Perhaps this maybe attributed to the fact that this student has been living here for longer duration and has good prospects in the department. This student's social alienation can be explained by using Tinto's (1975) theory of departure which states that, negative experiences reduce integration and distance the individual from academic and social communities.

On being asked what has been the most difficult aspect of being in Portugal, many said that language is the biggest obstacle in staying here,” *I felt a bit alienated due to language issues.*” Another respondent said, *“Sometimes the classes were in Portuguese language and I felt like I am completely out of place.”*(Inter,5, F, PhD) A student explained, *“Sometimes I attend some conferences where presentations are in Portuguese and I don’t know what to do. Many a times the material articles, books in the library for my work are in Portuguese I find it difficult. I studied some basic Portuguese but it doesn’t really help in academics. I felt alienated not because of being a foreigner but I would say because of the subject and language, it is new area of study for me.”*(Inter, 1, F, PhD) This has been in accordance with findings of Myles and Cheng (2003) which said language barriers can impede effective communication and study.

Other difficulties which students cited were food. As they were vegetarians they felt that they had troubles eating and couldn’t even enjoy Portuguese cuisine. This is peculiar of Indians as many of them are complete vegetarians. One respondent found bureaucracy and administrative tiring. This has been in accordance with the findings of Sangdehi (2009) about a study of Asian immigrants in Portugal.

It was found that student’s ability to socialise also depended on their marital status and age. It seemed to affect their social interactions. Out of the three married respondents only one seemed to enjoy an active social life which could be attributed to the fact that he is living alone here. All the other interviewees mentioned that they spent their leisure time with their families. None of the respondents mentioned that family life hampered their studies. An attempt based on responses of males and females was attempted. In the present sample there were only two females. However even amongst these there wasn’t any difference of responses in any of the dimensions. The age group of participants ranged from 21 years to 39 years. Based on the age of the respondents, it seems that younger students easily socialise and integrate with other international students; however older students find it difficult to integrate. This was seen in case of three participants aged 29, 30 and 39 years.

Even the literature suggests similar findings. Klomegah, and Roger Yao (2006) also found that younger students adjust better with others than older students in their study on social alienation. This could also be explained with the help of ‘theory of ego development’ by Loveinger (1976) which states that when students newly enter the college they are at a ‘conformist state’ and accept everything. Later they pass through increased ‘self-awareness’ and last stage is one in which students are individualistic and autonomous. In this sample if closely observed younger students those are the freshman in Masters program are happily integrated and older students (PhD’s) had some troubles adjusting with others.

**5.3 Diagrammatic representation of student experience patterns**

In the present sample following patterns of alienation and engagement were found. These are diagrammatic representation of the alienation and engagement pattern found in the present sample of students.

**Figure 3 Illustrating students who is academically alienated but socially engaged.**



**Explanation for Figure 3:**

This is the case of student who is academically alienated but socially engaged. In this sample only one student showed this type. Even in the case of this student it was seen that feelings of alienation were strongest at the beginning of the study for a period two years.



**Figure 4 Illustrating cases of students who are socially and academically engaged.**

		Academic	Social	
Student				Alienated
				Engaged

**Explanation for figure 4**

This represents students who are engaged both socially and academically. Majority of the students in this sample fit into this pattern. This could be attributed to the fact that these students have a clear goal for choosing their area of study and have learned to accommodate their existing beliefs and feelings towards people and are motivated to perform better in the tasks.

**Figure 5 Illustrating cases of students with traces of alienation in the sample.**

		Academic	Social	
Student				Alienated
				Engaged

**Explanation for figure 5**

Figure 5 presents the case of students who showed some sign of academic and social alienation but on other hand couldn't be classified as completely alienated.

**Figure 6 Illustrating case of student who is alienated socially but academically engaged.**



**Explanation for figure 6:**

This represents the case of students who are socially alienated but academically engaged. In this sample one student showed strong social alienation, whereas there were other students who are here with families they also can be classified in this as they don't find more time to socialise outside their families.

**5.4 Summary**

In this chapter the findings of the study were discussed. All the research questions were answered and also diagrammatic representation of the analysed data was presented. In the present sample one respondent seemed to be academically alienated and isn't performing well. Another respondent whose performance is not affected but he feels that he is not giving the hence it maybe concluded that this student showed some signs of alienation. One student showed some traces of alienation in terms of entering the higher education. As for the social alienation it can be said that one student, experiences social alienation. Direct as well indirect link is explored between students academic and social experience. Some students however said their academic and social lives are independent of each other.

## **Chapter 6 Conclusion**

### **6. Introduction:**

This chapter intends to provide a brief summary of the study, as well as the main conclusions and limitations of the presented research.

This research on 'student experience' was done using the framework of alienation and engagement. Jenifer Case's perspective was used in this study. Her framework is derived from Sarah Mann's work. Mann drew inspiration from Marxist thought and related it to higher education. This framework was used to ascertain whether Indian students were academically/socially engaged or alienated. The research setting was University of Aveiro.

From the literature review it was observed that there was a need to study this issue using a different analytical lens. A need was felt to study Indian students due to the lack of studies in this area. The process of studying this topic has been very interesting. Understanding students' experience from the framework of alienation and engagement has been a satisfying experience in itself. It was found that majority of students are engaged socially as well as academically.

The data was collected through semi-structured interviews and then analysed. The analysis of data reveals that many students had similar experiences. There were also certain exceptions to this. The responses of the participants were similar in some instances. For example: Many students upon arrival seemed to have felt lonely. Many students said that language was the most difficult factor which made their stay a bit difficult academically as well as socially. All students strongly felt that they would want to go back to India sooner or later.

There were instances of differences in responses of masters and PhD students in areas like relations with their teachers. PhD students seemed to share stronger relations with their professors than the Masters level students. Further it was also observed that the ability to socialise was strongly affected by marital status of respondents, single students were active socially whereas married students spent time mostly with their families.

With regards to ‘entering higher education’ all students except one had a clear goal as to why they want to enter into higher education and on studying abroad. The responses suggest that Portugal wasn’t a purposeful choice. A majority of them reported that it was either the course or a scholarship that brought them to Portuguese University. But all of them reported that they were happy being in Portuguese University.

As with ‘fitting in the university’ all students said that their relations with their teachers were cordial and they were engaged in terms of their interactions with their teachers. As for relations with classmates/ labmates three students seemed to be disengaged rest seemed to be engaged with their classmates. As for “staying into higher education” - assessment practises except two students all students seemed to be engaged and satisfied with their performance.

Based on the analysis of responses it was found that one student is academically alienated and another student is socially alienated. A couple of students were classified as showing few signs of alienation. Married students could be classified as being socially alienated as they found little time to socialise. All other students were classified as being engaged academically and socially.

### **6.1 Limitations of the study:**

- A limitation that can be identified with this study is the duration in which this study was carried out, student life and experiences need to be monitored and understood over a longer frame of time.
- A longitudinal study would be more effective for this topic. Another limitation of this study is that it was focus on a small number of Indian students in a particular setting/universities hence it is impossible to generalise the findings to other students.
- A third limitation is about the ability of the students to report their experiences.
- Further in this sample more male respondents are studied it would be interesting to study a higher number of females and then realise gender differences in the area.

## **6.2 Suggestions for future study:**

- It would be interesting to study these students when they return back to their country in order to see if their perceptions were the same about their academic and social integration in Portugal.
- Another interesting study maybe carried to understand teacher's perception about these students along with students own perceptions.
- What kind of learning strategies are employed by these students in a multi-cultural classroom and how similar and different are they from other international students.
- Instead of interviews analysis of diaries, blogs if maintained by the students might provide an interesting view.

## **6.3 Summary**

This chapter is the conclusion of the presented research. It summarises the research and the findings and thereafter identifies the limitations and provides suggestions for future work.

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**Appendix:**

**Dear Respondents,**

**Thank you for participating in this study. I will ask you some questions. Please feel free to express yourself and tell me as much information as possible. Please give me a true picture of your experience here in Portugal. Your identity will be kept confidential and all your responses will be only used for the purpose of my study, if you have any further queries please get back to me.**

**Best wishes**

**Soujanya**

**A. Questions about choosing study abroad:**

Why did you choose to study abroad?

Is there any specific reason to choose Portugal as your study destination?

Any special reason to choose this course that you are studying?

**B. Questions about academics:**

How different is studying in Portugal and India?

How do you feel about your studies here? ( eg enjoying challenging?)

How do you perceive yourself in terms of your abilities and knowledge in the class?

How are your relations with your classmates/ colleagues in your course.

What do you think hinders your learning?

What kind of relations do you share with your teachers?

How do you feel about your performance in examination/ assessment practises/ and completion of assignments?

**C. Questions about social life:**

Do you have time for activities outside studies ?

If yes what kind of activities? If no why?

Who all are your friends here?

Do you interact with other nationalities with the same comfort as you do with Indians?

Is your social life a helping in your studies? How? Why?

**D Personal questions**

Are u looking forward to settling in Portugal or India?

Are you looking forward to working after completion of studies?

Will this course aid in advancing in your career?

How do you find this experience of being away from home and family?

Did you ever felt alienated in your study experience in Portugal? How and why?

Have you ever felt as an outsider in Portugal? If yes How? If no why?

What has been the most difficult part of being in Portugal?

**E Some other questions:**

Age

How long have you been staying in Portugal

Marital status                      children

Family here or in India